

THE BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY & ART OF ANIMATION AND VFX

February
2009

ANIMATIONTM MAGAZINE



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**Annual School
Guide Issue**

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"What keeps 'Bolt' fresh is an unaffected exuberance, a genuine sense of fun, that is expressed above all through obsessive attention to craft... 'Bolt,' in other words, is a real movie."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, A.O. Scott

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Miley Cyrus appears courtesy of Hollywood Records. Jenny Lewis appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records.



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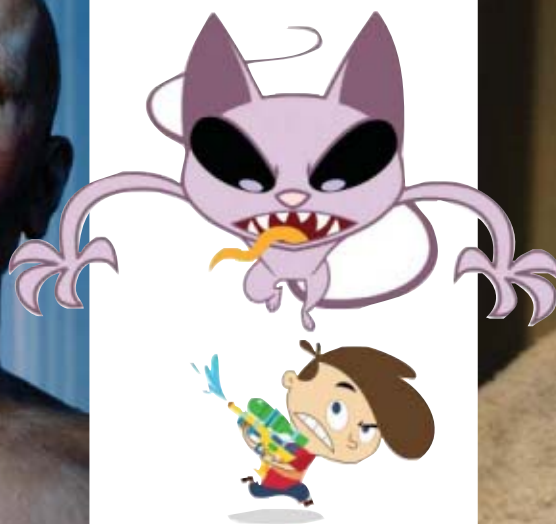
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Cover: Written and directed by Ari Folman, Sony Pictures Classics' *Waltz with Bashir* emerges as the biggest art movie of the year and a strong Oscar frontrunner.

NATPE Cover: Animation Development Company and Toonzone Studios bring their promising new show *Action Dad* to NATPE.



It's become a tradition at Animag to look ahead at some of the highlights of the animation calendar in the first issue of the year. I know that during these tough economic times, we've all had our fill of bad news and doom-and-gloom predictions. So we decided to remind ourselves of 10 solid reasons we're looking forward to the months ahead!

- **Mary and Max.** Talented Aussie animator Adam Elliot, who won an Oscar in 2004 for his short, *Harvie Krumpet*, is back for another excellent stop-motion project. Consider yourself quite lucky if you happen to catch this inspiring movie at Sundance this month.
- **Coraline.** It seems like we've been writing about Henry Selick's great-looking 3-D stop-motion flight of fancy for quite a while. We finally get to take in every minute of its uniquely twisted glory next month!
- **Monsters vs. Aliens.** The trailer for this awesome new B-movie spoof from the team at DreamWorks Animation looks fantastic. The fact that it comes at in beautiful, bold 3-D is just icing on the cake.
- **Wonder Woman.** Yes, we'd all like to see Angelina Jolie in the live-action version, but until that happens, we can enjoy this cool Warner Bros. Home Entertainment pic, which is directed by Lauren Montgomery and arrives on March 3.
- **Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea.** The latest piece of whimsy by animation master Hayao Miyazaki and the Ghibli team was a huge blockbuster in Japan, so we're hoping that this tale of a boy's friendship with a fish princess will get a U.S. release real soon!
- **The Illusionist.** All of us Sylvain Chomet fans have been counting the months for his latest movie, which is based on an unproduced script by French comic icon Jacques Tati. French audiences get to see it in May, but we haven't heard about U.S. distribution yet.
- **Up.** Old men with big dreams aren't usually the lead characters in an animated movie. That's why we can't wait to see what the geniuses at Pixar—led by Pete Docter and Bob Peterson—have cooked up for us this summer.
- **Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs.** Carlos Saldanha leads the Blue Sky team to bring us the third chapter in the hugely successful trilogy. Best of all, Chris Wedge is also back as our favorite nut-hoarding critter, *Scrat*.
- **Astro Boy.** When it comes to icons of anime, none is more dear to die-hard fans than Osamu Tezuka's boy robot. Here's to helmer David Bowers and his talented team of animators at Imagi, which has taken on the brave assignment of preparing this CG version of a classic.
- **The Princess and the Frog.** Disney masters Ron Clements and John Musker return to the big screen, and they're bringing traditional 2D animation and classic storytelling back with them. Need I say any more?

Of course, I can think of at least 50 more reasons to be foolishly optimistic during these strange times, but our art director will throw a sharp Exacto knife in my general direction if I make this any longer. So, please, remember our mantra: Things are going to be perfectly *Fine* in *O Nine*!



Mary and Max



Monsters vs. Aliens

Ramin

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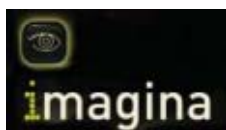
The Animation Planner

February



3 A couple of excellent DVDs hit the stores today: You can relive the past with *Oliver & Company* or go totally cutting edge with *Afro Samurai: Resurrection*. Other options include *Tom and Jerry Tales, Vol. 6*; *Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!: A Little Help from My Friends*, and *Dennis the Menace: Cruise Control*.

4-6 If you're in the vicinity of Monaco this week, you may want to check out the fantastic *Imagina 3D* event held in the celebrated principality (www.imagina.mc).



6 Henry Selick's much anticipated 3-D stop-motion feature *Coraline* opens in theaters today. Also competing for moviegoers' dollars is Steve Martin who reprises his role as Inspector Clouseau in *The Pink Panther 2*. Other new pics include *Fanboys* (about people who care about *Star Wars* a little too much) and *Push* (about people with superpowers!).



6-8 You can meet toon luminary Bruce Timm and catch a sneak preview of his new *Wonder Woman* animated feature at the New York Comic Con this week (www.nycomiccon.com).



7-8 Prepare yourself for the next economic mood swing at the **Game Design Expo** held in Vancouver this week (www.gamedesignexpo.com).



10 Older hipsters can catch *Tim & Eric Awesome Show, Great Job! Season 2* on DVD today, while younger auds can feast their eyes on *Dragon Ball Z: Season 8, Phineas and Ferb, Vol. 2: The Daze of Summer, Backyardigans: Robin Hood the Clean* and *Hurray for Huckle: Zooming Around Busytown*.



11-13 It's time to rub elbows with the big TV execs of children's programming at the annual **Kidscreen Summit** in New York City (www.kidscreensummit.com).



13 You can escape the unlucky vibes of *Friday the 13th* (a new remake of the classic horror pic arrives in theaters today), by taking in the stunning *Under the Sea 3D*, narrated by Jim Carrey. (Sorry, the Little Mermaid wasn't available.)

14 Our Valentine's Day dinner suggestion for you: Oysters Rockefeller, chocolate-dipped strawberries and a *Lady and the Tramp, Beauty and the Beast* DVD double feature.



15-18 Get ready to look for the next Elmo gizmo at the annual **American International Toy Fair** extravaganza held at New York's Javitz Center (www.toy-tia.org).



17 *The Real Adventures of Johnny Quest: The Complete First Season* arrives on DVD today. (This is not the original toon, but the stylish reboot that aired in 1996 and 1997 on Cartoon Network.)



17-19 Mumbai hosts the popular entertainment confab known as **FICCI-Frames** (www.ficci-frames.com).



20-28 Programs featuring Ralph Bakshi and Bill Plympton are part of the 2009 edition of the **Anima** animation festival held at Flagey, Brussels (www.animatv.be).



27 Run for cover! *The Jonas Brothers: The 3-D Concert Experience* is opening today! As an alternate option, you may want to check out *Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li* starring Neal McDonough.

To get your company's events and products listed in this monthly calendar, please e-mail mercedes@animationmagazine.net.

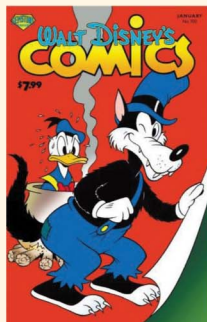
Books We Love



Walt Disney's Comics and Stories, No. 700

[Gemstone Publishing, \$9.99]

One of the main characters in Tatia Rosenthal's new stop-motion movie orders a book about the meaning of life for \$9.99. For the exact same price, you can get something even better—the 700th issue of Gemstone's wonderful comic-book collection *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*. How can you resist tagging along with Donald and Scrooge in the Daan Jippes opus "Seven-Hundredth Heaven," where almost every character that has popped up in the series makes an appearance? Or how about sinking your teeth into William Van Horn's very meta "Close-Up" in which Donald, Uncle Rumpus and the rest of the troop critique their own writer/artist? Donald leaves Duckburg to battle Zeke Wolf in Gil Turner's "Turtle Soup" and Lars Jansen's "Nothing New" features Hackney McWebfoot (what a great name!), an annoying relative of the Donald who just happens to be a comics writer. This 80-page collector's issue also includes part of Floyd Gottfredson's 1932 adventure, "Mickey Mouse Sails for Treasure Island." Of course, all these Gemstone journeys should come with a small consumer warning: Real life seems a lot more lackluster after basking in their glow.



The Spirit: The Movie Visual Companion

By Mark Cotta Vaz

[Titan Books, \$30]

Frank Miller's big-screen adaptation of Will Eisner's popular creation *The Spirit* has been generating lots of good word of mouth from the visual effects community. No matter how you feel about the acting chops of Gabriel Macht, who stars as Central City's secret crime-fighter, you've got to love Samuel L. Jackson as his nefarious enemy The Octopus and Eva Mendes and Scarlett Johansson as two sexy ladies who make Jessica Rabbit look like Tweety Bird's Granny. The very well-produced art book features interesting insights by Miller about bringing the character to cinematic life, as well as the usual assortment of photos, production art, sketches and excerpts from the screenplay. Cotta Vaz, who has penned numerous books on animated features including bestselling titles on *Bolt* and *Twilight* this season, does a wonderful job of giving us just what we need to know about the long-anticipated project, but it's the visual panache of the book that puts it high up on our geek wish list this month. ■



—Ramin Zahed

A Yabba Dabba Doo Giveaway!

We have five fantastic sets of *The Flintstones: The Complete Series* (Warner Bros., \$130) to give away to you die-hard Bedrock fans! This amazing collector's set features 24 discs—all six seasons of the popular Hanna-Barbera show which aired from 1960-1966 (that's 166 episodes) plus extras including the 1993 movie *I Yabba Dabba Do* and the 1977 hour-long special *A Flintstone Christmas*. Did we mention the DVDs come in a deluxe orange-colored TV box?

All you have to do is answer the following question correctly and send your response to webmaster@animationmagazine.net with the subject header "Flintstones DVD Contest."

Question: What is Fred's bowling name?

- (a) Twinkle Toes
- (b) Saber Tooth
- (c) Cliff Richards
- (d) Rock Star

Remember to please put "Flintstones DVD Contest" in the subject line of your e-mail and send it to webmaster@animationmagazine.net by Feb. 1, 2009. Five winners will be chosen at random on Feb. 4, 2009 and contacted by Friday, Feb. 6, 2009.



Like Father, Like Son

Looks like the Mouse House has a new junior daredevil in its animated pipeline. Last month, we got word that Walt Disney Television Animation has begun production on **Kid Knievel**, a 2D-animated comedy series about a 12-year-old boy who aspires to become the world's greatest daredevil. Famed thrill seeker "Kaptain" Robbie Knievel will serve as a stunt consultant on the series, which is slated to premiere in the fall of 2009 on the soon-to-launch Disney XD channel. Kids will be able to catch a sneak peek when five 55-second original animated shorts debut on DisneyXD.com in advance of the television premiere. Emmy-nominated producer Chris Savino (*Johnny Test*, *The Powerpuff Girls*) is exec producing and directing the toon. The



voice cast includes Chris Edgerly (*Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law*) as Francis Little, Matt Jones (Greek) as

quirky best friend Gunther, and Danny Cooksey (*Xiaolin Showdown*, *Pepper Ann*) as obnoxious older brother Brad.

Disney XD will debut in February with a multi-platform setup that will showcase a mix of live-action and animated programming for kids six-14, especially boys into discovery, sports, adventure and humor. Offerings will include sports-themed programming developed with ESPN. In the U.S., Disney XD will be a 24-hour, advertiser-supported network reaching 72 million households.

Hot Discs of 2008

[Animated Titles]

1. Sleeping Beauty 2-Disc Platinum (Disney)
2. WALL•E (Disney)
3. Tinker Bell (Disney)
4. Kung Fu Panda (Paramount)
5. The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning (Disney)
6. Futurama: Beast with a Billion Backs (Fox)
7. Nightmare Before Christmas Collector's (Disney)
8. The Simpsons: Complete 11th Season (Fox)
9. Family Guy, Vol. 6 (Fox)
10. South Park: Complete 11th Season (Comedy Central)



[VFX Titles]

1. The Dark Knight (Warner Bros.)
2. Iron Man (Paramount)
3. Stargate: Continuum (MGM)
4. Heroes: Season 2 (Universal)
5. Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (Paramount)
6. National Treasure 2 (Disney)
7. Transformers (Paramount)
8. Batman Begins (Warner Bros.)
9. Smallville: Season 7 (Warner Bros.)



Most Popular Holiday Toys

1. UDance (Hasbro)
2. Elmo Live (Fisher Price)
3. Hanna Montana Song Writing Swing (Play Along)
4. Mega Rig Space Shuttle (Matchbox)
5. Learn & Groove Musical Table (LeapFrog)
6. Little Mommy Gotta Go Doll (Mattel)
7. Electronic Catch Phrase Game (Hasbro)
8. Bendaroos (As Seen On TV)
9. Nerf N-Strike Recon CS-6 Dart Blaster (Hasbro)
10. Polly Pocket Ultimate Party Boat Playset (Mattel)

Source: amazon.com 12/26/08

The Year's Biggest Box Office Hits

Title (Studio)	Domestic Gross
1. The Dark Knight (Warner Bros.)	\$531.8
2. Iron Man (Paramount)	\$318.3
3. Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (Paramount)	\$317
4. Hancock (Sony)	\$228
5. WALL•E (Disney)	\$223.8
6. Kung Fu Panda (Paramount/DreamWorks)	\$215.4
7. Madagascar 2 (Paramount/DreamWorks)	\$173.4
8. Quantum of Solace (Sony)	\$162.2
9. Twilight (Summit Ent.)	\$161.1
10. Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears A Who! (Fox)	\$154.5

Source: Boxofficemojo.com 12/25/08



Quote of the Month

"This environment surrounding our children is full of virtual reality: television, video games, e-mail, mobile phones and manga ... I think this saps children of their strength."



— Director Hayao Miyazaki (*Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea*), during a recent press conference in Tokyo.

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- Lisa Schwarzbaum / ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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War and Remembrance

Israeli filmmaker Ari Folman's innovative animated documentary, *Waltz with Bashir*, utilizes the vast possibilities of the medium to tell a haunting, personal tale. **by Ramin Zahed**

The real-life nightmare of the early '80s war in Lebanon isn't your average subject for an animated movie. But, then again, director Ari Folman's award-winning *Waltz with Bashir* is, by all means, not your average film. The Israeli animated documentary, which made a distinctive debut at the Cannes Film Festival last year, has been lauded for its innovative use of the medium to tell a difficult and complex story. Not surprisingly, the Sony Pictures Classics release has landed on numerous critics' best of the year lists and nabbed a Golden Globe nomination for Best Foreign Language film in December. Award season watchers see the movie as a solid contender in the Oscar race, along with U.S. studio heavyweights such as *WALL•E* and *Kung Fu Panda*.

A well-respected writer and produc-

er in his home country, Folman (Israeli TV version of *In Therapy*) was a 19-year-old infantry soldier in the Israel Defense Forces back in 1982. In the movie, an old friend tells the director about a recurring nightmare that may have a connection with his experiences of fighting in the Lebanon War. However, Ari discovers that he has no real recollection of his life during that period, so he begins to interview old friends and comrades to find out more about the horrors that his unconscious memory seems to have blocked.

Speaking from his home in Israel in a phone interview, Folman says he saw no better way to investigate the world of memory and the surreal images of the subconscious than animation. "I find that animation gives you total artistic freedom," he notes. "Thank God I discovered it—this is my second ani-

imated project, but I have become addicted to it. It allows filmmakers to go from reality to dreams to the subconscious, and to mix in metaphors and hallucinations, all very seamlessly. Because it's so easy to go from one dimension to another, it becomes addictive."



Ari Folman

Folman says his addiction to the format began a few years ago when he was working on a documentary series charting eight different love stories. "I wanted to begin every episode with a scientist talking about the biological aspects of love," he notes. "But then we discovered that the scientists looked a bit patronizing and cold-blooded in the footage. So we decided to draw them, to animate them using their voices, and it worked! Although the animation was basic Flash, it really helped us tell the story in a more effective way."

From the beginning, Folman wanted to stay away from the rotoscope-based animation seen most recently in features such as *A Scanner Darkly* and *The Chicago 10*. "I think it's impossible to get attached emotionally to rotoscoped imagery," he says. Led by animation director Yoni Goodman and art



Battle Fatigue: Ari Folman's lean team of animators worked with an estimated \$1.7 million budget to bring to life the surreal visions of the lead characters.

FEATURES

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director David Polonsky, Folman and his team used interviews and newsreel footage as a springboard to create storyboards with over 2,300 illustrations, unifying the various textures and images of the story. "The design dictated a lot of our procedure. I was obsessed with depicting the characters realistically. We found that it's easy to do the action sequences, while the slower ones are more complicated to animate. We mixed cut-out animation in Flash and mixed it with 3D modeling in Maya and After Effects. We also created a program we call Mud (in Hebrew) to simulate dust effects on film." He adds that he prefers the stylized, more rough approach. "I can't stand the cold, clear visuals we see in some CG films."

Folman decided to use a short segment of news footage depicting the results of the Sabra and Shatila massacre at the end of the movie, which is a brilliant choice as it really jolts the audience and is a wake-up call about the real horrors of war. "I really wanted to stay away from making a political film," he points out. "For me, it was a personal story ... it was a combination of my own experiences. Of course, it has an anti-war message. There are all these clichés about war: I wanted to emphasize that there is no glamour, there is no glory, no bravery, no brotherhood. It's

a useless, awful thing."

The filmmaker says he was also surprised by the fact that there was little controversy about the touchy areas covered by the movie. "You know, I was expecting debates and controversies, but I was shocked when nothing like that happened," he comments. "We didn't know what was going to happen after we finished it. All we focused on was finishing the movie—when you have eight people working on a \$1.7 million movie, all you care about is just

doing the work. People told me that things can happen in Cannes, and they did! We've been on automatic pilot since the festival, just going all over the world and showing it at festivals."

Since Folman is a relative newcomer to the animation scene, we had to find out what he thinks of this brave, new world? "You know, I used to see a lot of stuff when I was a kid, but it's really nothing compared to the amount of animation my own young children see these days! It's really wrong, but

"I really wanted to stay away from making a political film. For me, it was a personal story ... it was a combination of my own experiences. Of course, it has an anti-war message. There are all these clichés about war: I wanted to emphasize that there is no glamour, there is no glory, no bravery, no brotherhood. It's a useless, awful thing."

—*Waltz with Bashir* writer and director Ari Folman



FEB•09 6



Darkness Falls: Although *Waltz with Bashir* tackles a tough, political subject, its personal p.o.v. and exhilarating artistic vision have secured it top spots on many of the 2008 best-of-the-year lists.

they're really addicted. We watch all these Disney and Pixar movies over and over again."

He says animation has entered a new era in his home country of Israel, considering the fact that American audiences have the chance to see two of its new animated features (the second one is Tatia Rosenthal's \$9.99) in theaters this month. "I

think before that, the last time we had an animated movie was back in the early '60s. It was a stop-motion biblical movie. When there is no real tradition in your country, then you have complete freedom to do your own stuff!"

Although *Bashir* may be a very tough act to follow, Folman has come up with another complex storyline and visual approach. "I am developing Stanislaw Lem's science fiction book *The Futurological Congress*—he is the guy who wrote *Solaris*. It has lots of jumping around from present to the future and the past. The book is really wild and has a lot of stuff going on, so I'll have to



control the material!"

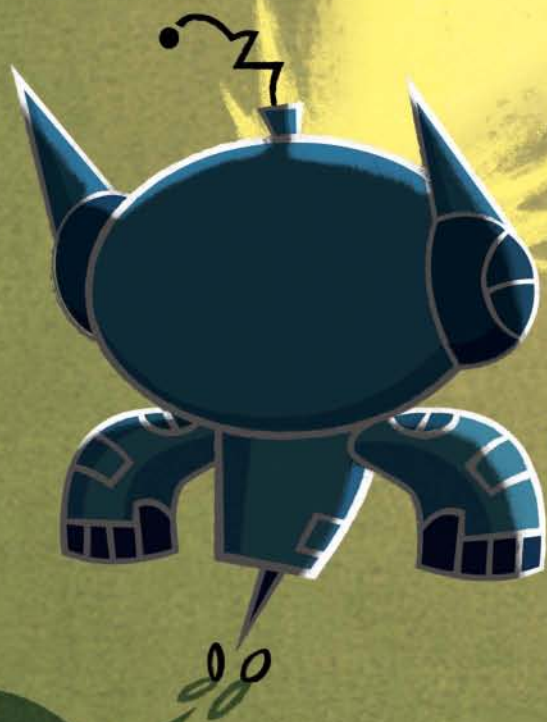
When it comes to sharing some of the lessons he's learned in the past four years, he laughs for a minute. Then he says, "Don't try to raise all the complete budget in advance. Start with what you have. Do your best with what you have. I started with three minutes, then I traveled a bit, then I got 20 more minutes, showed it to some people, then I did 20 more. Don't be a wise guy and think you can raise the budget all at once. You have to be innovative—the worst is when you try to imitate someone else's style!"

Folman told a wickedly funny story

about his meeting with Harvey Weinstein in a *Time Out London* interview last year which illustrates his points beautifully. "On the last day in Cannes, Harvey Weinstein met me in a bar at four in the morning. He said, 'I want to see you at seven o'clock. We'll have breakfast.' So I go and he says, 'Congratulations on the film, you're

going to win the Palme d'Or tonight.' So I say to him, 'If it's so great, why don't you buy it?' and he says, 'I can't buy it, I've got too many films.' Then he asks me what I'm doing next, and I tell him that I want to do an adaptation of Stanislaw Lem's *The Futurological Congress*, and he's not interested at all. After two minutes he says, 'You know what? You should do the next *Bourne Identity* film. You were born to do Bourne.' Then I got up and walked out the door." ■

Sony Pictures Classic's *Waltz with Bashir* is playing in select U.S. theaters this month.



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No Cheap Thrills Here

Tatia Rosenthal makes change with her international co-pro indie, \$9.99. *by Mercedes Milligan*

In a seemingly average apartment building, layabout Dave Peck's interest is piqued by a mysterious ad for a booklet claiming to give the meaning of life in "easy-to-follow, simple terms" for the unbelievable price of \$9.99. Inspired (and broke), Dave sets out to share his discovery with his fellow tenants, only to find that each is entangled in his or her own somewhat bizarre pursuit of happiness. Morphing furniture, guardian angels and Lilliputian drunks populate Dave's surreal stop-motion world, sprung from the mind of renowned writer Etgar Keret and brought to life by fellow Israeli, director Tatia Rosenthal.

Rosenthal's feature film debut, \$9.99 grew out of previous short subject stop-motion pieces she had created based on Keret's work. One, *Crazy Glue* (1998), was brought to Keret's attention, and Rosenthal's painterly puppet design and directorial approach immediately struck him as something special. The two decided to collaborate on a longer form drama, and immediately set to

work on the script, which combines and expands upon several of Keret's short stories.

Through a series of well-deserved opportunities—spots in Sundance's Writer's and Director's Labs and a hefty grant from alma mater NYU—Rosenthal was able to create 2005's *A Buck's Worth*; a stand-alone short which also served as a promo for the intended feature. At the same time, Keret was asked to meet with Aussie producer Emile Sherman (*Candy*) in Tel Aviv, and presented the script to him. Excited, Sherman immediately set wheels in motion, contacting Rosenthal and proposing an Australian-Israeli co-production arrangement. Israeli producer Amir Harel (*Jellyfish*) jumped on board, and the cross-hemisphere production efforts kicked off in earnest.

Auteur Meets Author

Rosenthal's journey to animated filmmaking began at a young age, thanks to John Canemaker's animated segment in *The World According to Garp*. "The sequence

was meaningful, joyous and surprising, and I was sparked with my first experience of wanting to create work of equal emotional impact," Rosenthal recalls, "Years later when



Tatia Rosenthal

I started my studies at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, I realized that the head of the animation department was none other than Mr. Canemaker!" The coincidence struck a chord with the aspiring filmmaker, and she began to explore animation as an emotional, adult medium. Stop-motion meshed with her aesthetic ideas, and Rosenthal felt that the process fit her skills and the way she wanted to work.

While at NYU, Rosenthal created *Breaking the Pig*, also a Keret story, kicking off what would evolve into a mutually admiring work relationship between the artists. In *Pig*, *Crazy Glue* and now in *\$9.99*, Rosenthal developed an assured approach to bringing Keret's unique works to life, and her careful attention to these interpretations produced films with firm visual and emotional parallels.

"My first concern was to do justice to Etgar Keret's magnificent, bittersweet, exacting literary voice and brilliant stories," Rosenthal enthuses, "Instinctively, I felt



Room with a View: The hand-crafted characters in Rosenthal's movie are so close to life that audiences can easily forget that the world of \$9.99 is a stop-motion creation.

that stop-motion animation was a fitting companion to his matter-of-fact expression of a complex reality through everyday situations and magical realism." She feels the sparse environments and unique character expressions of stop-motion allows for "an observational distance from reality," which gets the audience past appearances to the humanity of a story.

The Feature-Length Leap

Making the jump from independent shorts (accented by animation for kids fare *Blues Clues* and *The Wonder Pets!*) to directing a feature was a challenge for the first-timer. "On a short film, your plan is easier to pre-visualize and you spend your time chipping away at its execution ... On a feature, there are so many elements to juggle and unexpected challenges that you need to constantly re-evaluate, re-prioritize and re-think your plans to ensure that all your scenes are effective and yet stay on budget." Rosenthal marvels, "Dan Alderson, one of the animators on the film, compared directing a feature to trying to keep a dozen puppies from sliding off a table. I think he's on to something."

Adding to these new concerns were the difficulties of working on a multi-continental production (stars Geoffrey Rush and Anthony La Paglia recorded out of L.A., for example), but Rosenthal says being away from home for a couple years was worth the chance to meet amazing talents and experience the support of

the international film community.

There is also the question of artistic integrity: Did Rosenthal feel "compromised" in her vision for the film by working with a team? "I was putting the film's design and animation in the hands of amazingly talented people," she says, "I really enjoyed sifting through numerous suggestions and picking the elements that match my aesthetic—I am far more comfortable in that role than in the role of crafting everything myself ... However, it wasn't a smooth adjustment. I had to learn how to communicate accurately, and in some cases it was easier than in others, but, ultimately, I love this job."

A Priceless Result

Since launching into the festival circuit in 2008, \$9.99 has garnered plenty of critical acclaim and audience buzz for its bewitchingly gritty visuals—not to mention refreshingly mature (albeit trippy) story and piteously human characters. While the building blocks of \$9.99's look are evident in Rosenthal's previous works, the feature gives a streamlined, "finished" impression with its detailed sets and painted characters (inspired in part by the works of Lucien Freud). The look is so engrossing, so connective, it's hard to see \$9.99 for the low-budget project it is—all thanks to a tight-knit and dedicated team of artists who were able to balance the ideal with the reality.

"The look for \$9.99 is the result of a collaboration between Melinda Doring the production designer, Phillip Beadsmoore

the puppet master, their teams and myself," explains Rosenthal, "As inspiration, we drew on countless references, and the early design work of Yael Komarovsky—the set designer on my short films—and my own early puppet designs whose mission statement was to create a three dimensional impressionist world." Budgetary limits did affect certain decisions: "It's cheaper to keep your sets cut at straight angles than round edged, for example," she says, "But I am extremely pleased with the beautiful, fully detailed world that Melinda came up with at the end of this process."

Additional elements that contribute to the powerful effect of the film are the stellar voice cast (Australian actors Samuel Johnson, Barry Otto, Claudia Karvan, Joel Edgerton, Leanne Walsman and Ben Mendelsohn join Rush and La Paglia's efforts) and original music by celebrated Aussie composer Christopher Bowen ("I got teary in the editing room, despite having seen the film dozens of times by that point," confesses Rosenthal).

With plenty of nods this awards season, Rosenthal is demure in her reflections on the ups and downs of production: "There were many great moments, and many really tough ones that stemmed from having a very small budget, but nothing could eclipse or compare to the moment the film was finished and knowing I was happy with the end result." When pressed, she admits there is one honor she's especially proud of: "If I had to pick, the most exciting moment so far would have to be finding out about the Annies nominations. I am flabbergasted at the thought that our film is on the same ballot with the other nominees."

The newly minted director is already hitting the books—literally—to find her next project, which she hopes will be launched off the success of \$9.99. As for the animated film industry she is now firmly cemented in, Rosenthal is optimistic. "The animation industry is seeing a boom of independent work, a lot of which is geared toward adults ... This is a very exciting trend, and I hope those indie films pushing the boundaries of the genre find their audience and prove financially viable so they can keep being made." ■

Regent Releasing's \$9.99 has wrapped its limited engagement run in Los Angeles, but check out www.9dollars99movie.com for up to date schedules.

Hecho en Mexico

Several new animated TV and feature projects from young Mexican studios reflect the growth and potential of the region's local talent. **by Ramin Zahed**

Because our media has a tendency to cover the more sensationalistic and political stories about Mexico, we don't get to learn about the country's thriving animation business too often. However, judging from the recent number of quality Mexican toons—both on TV and the big screen—it's about time the country's talented toon players took a bow and basked in the limelight.

Mexico City's Anima Studios recently wrapped its second season of its global hit *El Chavo*, which is an animated version of Televisa's classic kids show. The studio recently announced that it is producing the \$2.6 million *Kung Fu Magoo* feature for Classic Media. Headed by Fernando de Fuentes and Jose García de Letona, the six-year-old studio reportedly produces 60 minutes of animation per month.

Anima's previous feature efforts, *Wizards & Giants* and *Imaginum*, are distributed by Porchlight Entertainment internationally, and its third feature, *Agent Macaw: Shaken and Stirred*, will be released in Mexico later in 2009. According to García de Letona, the studio also wrapped a holiday special titled *A Martian Christmas* recently. "Our budgets range from \$2.5 million to \$4 million," he adds. "We strive to make each new project better than the ones

before. It's very important for us to create strong characters and tell superb stories. Another big priority is to deliver works that are internationally distributed and to arrange co-productions if possible."

Another animated hit in the country was *Una Pelicula des Huevos* (The Egg Movie), which was based on a series of web toons created by HuevoCartoon Producciones. Distributed by Videocine (a subsidiary of Televisa) and directed by Gabriel and Rodolfo Riva Palacio Alatraste, the 2006 feature followed the adventures of a rebellious egg who decides to have some fun before becoming a full-grown chicken! The runaway hit made over \$13 million at the box office, making it the



Santo Domingo's Brijes

second most popular locally produced movie in the history of the country. The eggs also star in *Videos con Huevos*, a collection of the web toons, which airs daily on Los Angeles-based Spanish-lingo outlet, LATV.

García de Letona points out that



Anima Studios' and Classic Media's *Kung Fu Magoo*



Brijes



Anima Studios' *Imaginum*



Huevo-Cartoons' *Videos con Huevos*



Ithrex/Santo Domingo's *Sabel*



Anima Studios' *Wizards & Giants*

before his studio, there was little animated content produced in Mexico. "Before *Wizards & Giants*, our country hadn't made an animated movie for over 30 years. Our TV show, *El Chavo*, is the first long-format animated TV series ever produced in Mexico. Since then, we have had several new projects made by new animation studios in our country."

One of these studios is ANIMEX 2D, which produced the well-received animated feature *La Leyenda de la Nahuala* last year. Directed by Ricardo Arnaiz, the movie was inspired by the country's folklore and culture and centered on a young boy who overcomes his fears when his brother is kidnapped by an evil spirit. With a team of 40 animators based in Puebla Leon and Mexico City, the production relied on Toon Boom Harmony to merge 2D and CG animation artfully.

Another young studio that's been doing some impressive work in recent months is Santo Domingo Animation, headed by talented young CEO Ricardo Duprat. He's currently developing an animated feature film called *Brijes*

for 2010, which explores the magical world of animal spirits and a young boy named Freddy, who teams up with these creatures to save the world. Duprat also plans to create a TV series and multi-platform projects based on the same concept.

"We're definitely witnessing a boom in the animation scene in Mexico," says Duprat. "We've seen several animated features and projects from different Mexican studios—which is a totally new phenomenon. I see this as the direct result of the creation and expansion of quality theatrical exhibition chains for the past decade, easier

great men and women who happen to love animation and who are willing to do whatever it takes to get their projects on the screen."

Of course, that's not to say that producing fresh animated content in the country doesn't have its share of challenges and drawbacks. Duprat believes that the toughest part of his business is securing the financing. "The second one is securing the right distribution and making sure that the distributor goes all the way in order to guarantee a good exhibition," he adds.

Duprat points out that the estimated budget for *Brijes*, for example, is \$3 mil-

"We've seen several animated features and projects from different Mexican studios, which is a totally new phenomenon. I see this as the direct result of the creation and expansion of quality theatrical exhibition chains, easier ways to access new technologies and the recent success of the Mexican film industry in general."

—Ricardo Duprat, CEO of Santo Domingo Animation

ways to access new technologies and the recent success of the Mexican film industry in general. Along with, of course, the entrepreneurial spirits of

lion, which is a fraction of what Hollywood animation studios quote for their toons. "This is still a big number for the industry in Mexico," he notes. "At the

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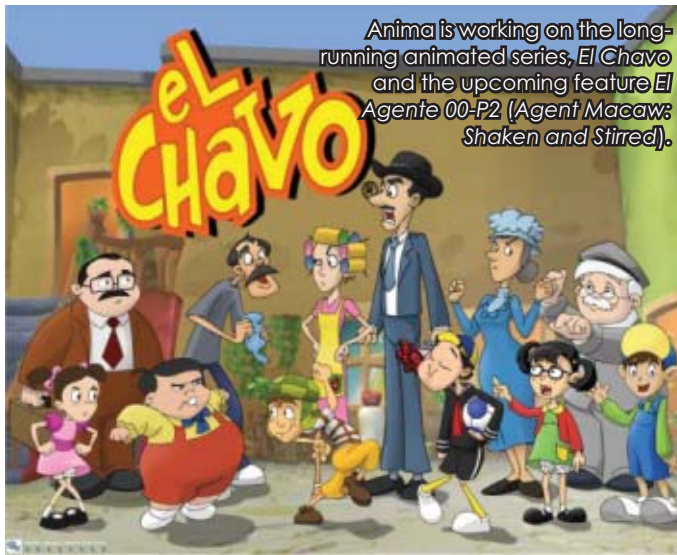
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4x35' (DTV)



Anima is working on the long-running animated series, *El Chavo* and the upcoming feature *El Agente 00-P2* (Agent Macaw: Shaken and Stirred).



same time, we are working on the distribution of *Sabel*, another animated feature targeted for a more sophisticated, mature audience. The budget for the movie, on which we're partnering with another Mexican studio, Ithrax Productions, is about \$1.5 million."

Another sign of the growth of the industry in the region is the launch of various world-class animation and vfx programs in recent years. In 2005, 3dmx University of Digital Design opened

its doors in Guadalajara, which also hosts the country's biggest film festival. Founded by Xavier Carmona and Jorge Villalobos, the university offers programs in 3D animation, videogame design, digital cinema and architectural design. "A low overhead and a growing surplus of local talent allows us to slash costs without sacrificing quality," Carmona told *Variety*.

The importance of training home-grown talent and preserving the na-

tional culture and indigenous stories of the country is as important as competing with the latest slick CG-animated imports from Pixar and DreamWorks. "Creating an industry from scratch, we strive to tap into the creative pool of the artists in Mexico as well as to provide them with enough infrastructure and projects," García de Letona concludes. "These new experiences will help their talents flourish to their maximum potential." ■



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An Animated Affair to Remember

With Tom Kenny as the host, the 36th Annual Annie Awards promises to be one heck of a show.

by Ramin Zahed

You know the producers of the Oscar telecast are hoping that their host (Hugh Jackman) will be half as funny, hip and down-right entertaining as Tom Kenny, the multi-talented actor who voices SpongeBob SquarePants and will host the 36th Annual Annie Awards this month. You only have to take one look at all the other dreary awards shows to realize what a great job Kenny has done in the past few years.



Antran Manoogian



Tom Kenny

Slated for Friday, Jan. 30 at UCLA's Royce Hall in Los Angeles, the show is once again presented by the International Animated Film Society, ASIFA-Hollywood. The org's hard-working president Antran Manoogian tells us that he's thrilled that this annual celebration of the men and women of our industry will help put the spotlight on toons once again. He also points out a few new changes about the event that may be interesting to our readers.

"You may notice that we revised the rules so that we could broaden areas of individual achievements," he notes. "In the past, we only recognized the achievements in features and in home entertainment/TV, but now we've broadened the race to include short form projects, videogames and commercials as well."

Manoogian also points out that there's been a change in the judging process of the storyboard categories. In years past, the judges viewed the storyboard on individual reels, but this year, they'll be able to look at the storyboard art submitted online.

To bring the show to as many fans and professionals as possible outside the L.A.

area, the producers are planning to web-cast it on the Annie Awards website (www.annieawards.org). "We'll take the show and roll it out in segments in bite-sized pieces," says the always-afable Manoogian. "This is the first year that we're doing this, so hopefully, a lot more people can enjoy the show, and maybe down the line, it can generate some TV interest as well."

And the Annies May Go to ...

With a total of 17 nominations, DreamWorks Animation's *Kung Fu Panda* kicked its way to the top of the list this year, with nods in the best animated feature, character animation, character design, directing, music, production design, storyboarding, voice acting and writing categories. Also up for the Best Animated Feature Annie are Walt Disney Animation Studios' *Bolt* (nine nominations), Disney/Pixar's *Wall•E* (eight nominations), Sony Pictures Classics' *Waltz with Bashir* and Sherman Pictures/Lama Films' *\$9.99*.

Nickelodeon leads the pack in television with 12 nominations. The network's *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Mighty B!* are both up for Best Animated Television Production Produced for Children, along with Cartoon Network's *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends* and *Underfist: Halloween Bash* and Warner Bros. Animation's holiday special *A Miser Brothers Christmas*. Nominees for the Best Animated Television Production are Disney's *Phineas and Ferb*, FOX's *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill*, and [adult

swim]'s *Moral Orel* and *Robot Chicken: Star Wars Episode II*, both produced by ShadowMachine.

Special juried awards honoring career achievement and exceptional contributions to animation will also be awarded. *King of the Hill* creator Mike Judge, Pixar's John Lasseter and Aardman's Nick Park will receive the Winsor McCay Award for career contributions to the art of animation. The June Foray Award will go to Bill Turner for significant and benevolent or charitable impact on the art and industry of animation and a Certificate of Merit will be presented to Amir Avini, Mike Fontanelli, Kathy Turner and Alex Vassilev. ■

For information, go to www.annieawards.org.

Here is a partial list of the contenders in the major categories:

Best Animated Feature: *Bolt*, *Kung Fu Panda*, \$9.99, WALL•E, *Waltz with Bashir*

Best Animated Home

Entertainment Production:

Batman: Gotham Knight, *Christmas Is Here Again*, *Futurama: The Beast with a Billion Backs*, *Justice League: The New Frontier*, *The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning*

Best Animated Short Subject:

Glago's Guest, *Hot Dog*, *Presto*, *Sebastian's Voodoo*, *Wallace & Gromit: A Matter of Loaf and Death*

Best Animated TV Production:

King of the Hill, *Moral Orel*, *Phineas and Ferb*, *Robot Chicken: Star Wars Episode II*, *The Simpsons*

Best Animated TV Production for Children:

A Miser Brothers Christmas, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, *The Mighty B!*, *Underfist: Halloween Bash*

Best Animated Video Game:

Dead Space, *Kung Fu Panda*, WALL•E





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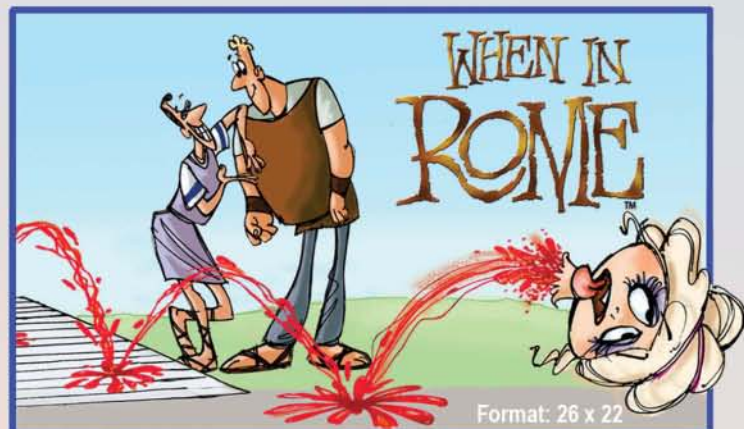
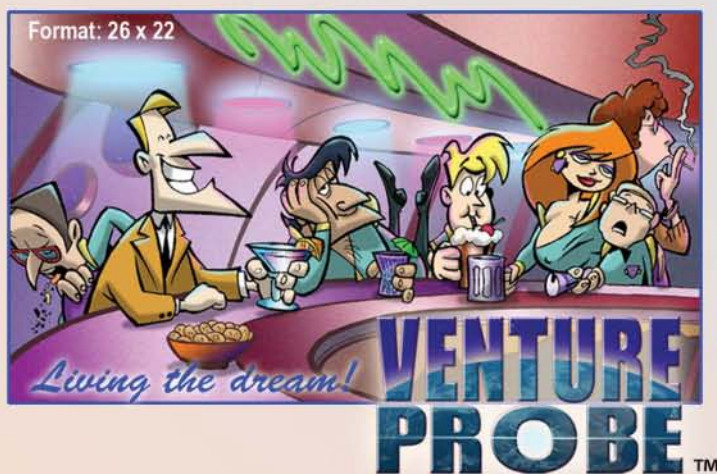
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"SERIOUSLY, WHAT COULD GO WRONG?"

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Toon Town Anniversaries!

Milestones and memories of our favorite animated characters and projects.

95 Years Ago:

In February, pioneering animator Winsor McCay guarantees himself a place in toon history by creating that amazingly fluid short called **Gertie the Dinosaur**. Animator **Ward Kimball**, one of Disney's Nine Old Men, who worked on such classics as *Snow White* and *the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinocchio* and *Peter Pan* was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 14.



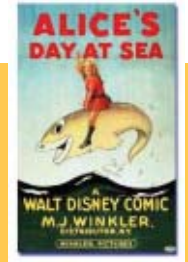
90 Years Ago:

Otto Messmer and Pat Sullivan's **Feline Follies**—the first **Felix the Cat** cartoon, is released (although he's called Master Tom in this short).



85 Years Ago:

Disney releases **Alice's Day at Sea**, starring Virginia Davis, the first of the *Alice Comedies* series, which blended animation with live action (1924-1927).



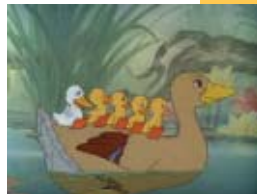
80 Years Ago:

Walter Lantz introduces **Oswald the Lucky Rabbit** in **Ozzie of the Circus**. Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks' spooky short **The Skeleton Dance** arrives in theaters.



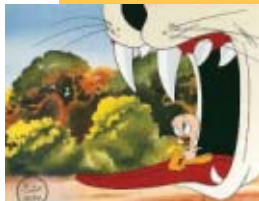
70 Years Ago:

In March, **Donald Duck** makes his debut in **The Wise Little Hen**. Dick Lundy designed the short-tempered water fowl and Clarence "Ducky" Nash voiced. In April, audiences are treated to Disney's Oscar-winning short **The Ugly Duckling** (directed by Jack Cutting) and Fleischer Studio's **Popeye the Sailor Meets Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp**.



65 Years Ago:

Terrytoons' **Wreck of the Hesperus**—the first in the **Mighty Mouse** series (1944-1961)—is released. In August, Bob Clampett's **Birdy and the Beast** kicks off the **Tweety and Sylvester** series (1944-1964).



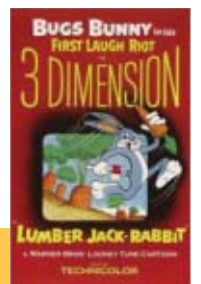
60 Years Ago:

Directed by John Hubley, **Ragtime Bear**—the first in the **Mr. Magoo** series—arrives in theaters, while **Road Runner** debuts in Chuck Jones' **Fast and Furry-ous**.



55 Years Ago:

In November, Chuck Jones presents **Lumber Jack Rabbit**, an experimental 3-D short. **The Tasmanian Devil** makes his first appearance in Robert McKimson's short **Devil May Hare**. Jay Ward and Bill Scott's wonderfully



wacky **Rocky and His Friends** introduces the world to an intrepid squirrel and his dim-witted moose buddy, Bullwinkle.

continued on next page



25 Years Ago:

Action toys for boys are

big this year as **Transformers** and **Voltron: Defender of the Universe** join the fall TV lineup. Miyazaki's **Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind** opens in Japan.

Jim Henson's Muppet Babies revives

Kermit, Piggy and Fozzy at a younger age and in animated form on CBS.

Cogsrove-Hall's **The Wind in the Willows** debuts on ITV in the U.K.



30 Years Ago:

The New Fat Albert Show, **Scooby and Scrappy-Doo**, **The Super Globetrotters** and **Happy Birthday, Charlie Brown** put familiar characters in forgettable vehicles.

The Berenstain Bears' Christmas Tree introduces young viewers to the animated version of the popular books by Jan and Stan Berenstain.



40 Years Ago:

In March, **Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day** wins the Oscar for Best Animated Short.

Marv Newland's classic short **Bambi Meets Godzilla** delights festival-goers around the world. Two of Hanna-Barbera's classic pooch toons debut on TV in the fall: **Scooby-Doo Where Are You!** and **Dastardly and Muttley in Their Flying Machines**.

Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin Jr. create an evergreen holiday special called **Frosty the Snowman**.



45 Years Ago:

Rankin-Bass and Burl Ives make **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer** an instant Christmas classic on NBC in December.

On Oct. 3, W. Watts Biggers and Joseph

Harris' rhyming canine superhero **Underdog** takes flight on NBC. Hanna-Barbera and illustrator Doug Wildey kick off the intriguing **Jonny Quest** series (Fan alert: A new DVD set launched in January!). HB's **Magilla Gorilla** also debuts in the fall.



Robert Stevenson's perfect adaptation of P.L. Travers' book, **Mary Poppins** blends live-action and animation, makes Julie Andrews a household name and wins five Oscars (with 11 noms).



50 Years Ago:

Sleeping Beauty, Disney's first animated feature created for the 70mm format, is released in January.



15 Years Ago:

Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff's majestic **The Lion King** becomes a new benchmark in feature animation at Disney. Upon its release on June 15, the film is showered with critical praise and record attendance. Quirky and original animated series such as Klasky Csupo's **Aaahh!!! Real Monsters** and **Duckman** to **The Critic**, **Space**



Ghost Coast to Coast and **The Tick** push the envelope all over the TV schedule. Innovative new toons such as **The Fantastic Four**, **Gargoyles**,



The Magic School Bus and **ReBoot** offer a wide range of graphic styles on U.S. TV channels this fall.



20 Years Ago:

Michael Sporn's award-winning **Abel's Island** arrives as a TV special.

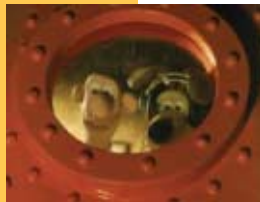
In February, Nick Park's plasticine duo, **Wallace and Gromit** make their first appearance in **A Grand Day Out**.

John Lasseter and William Reeves' **Tin Toy** wins the Oscar for Best Animated Short in March.

Don Bluth's **All Dogs Go to Heaven** premieres in November.

On Nov. 17, Ron Clements and John Musker's musical spin on Hans Christian Andersen's **The Little Mermaid** signals a new chapter in Disney's feature animation.

On Dec. 17, Matt Groening's **The Simpsons' Christmas Special** kicks off one of TV's most influential, brilliant and long-lasting series of all time on FOX-TV.



10 Years Ago:

The Iron Giant, Brad Bird's critically acclaimed movie about a boy and his friendship with an alien robot, captures the hearts of animation lovers, despite disastrous marketing by Warner Bros.

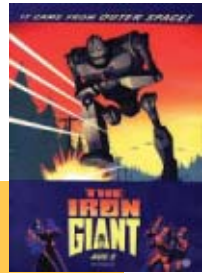
Stephen Hillenburg introduces the world to the wonderful Bikini Bottom world and its beloved hero in **SpongeBob SquarePants** on Nickelodeon.

1999 will go down as one of the better years for TV animation as

Angela Anaconda, **Batman Beyond**, **Bob the Builder**, **Courage the Cowardly Dog**, **Ed, Edd n Eddy**, **Family Guy**, **Futurama**, **Home Movies**, **Mickey Mouse Works**,

The PJs and **Rocket Power** all make their debut.

It's also a huge year for quality animated features as Pixar's **Toy Story 2**, **South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut** and **Disney's Tarzan** draw audiences to theaters.





5 Years Ago:

Gary Baseman's **Teacher's Pet**, directed by Tim Björklund, hits theaters in January.

DreamWorks Animation's **Shrek 2** (directed by Andrew Adamson, Kelly Asbury and Conrad Vernon) draws huge audiences to theaters all summer long.

Butch Hartman's **Danny Phantom**, Warner Bros. Animation's **Justice League Unlimited** and **The Batman**, Cartoon Network's **Megas XLR**, Disney TV's **Brandy & Mr. Whiskers**

and **Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!**, Nelvana's **Miss Spider's Sunny Patch Friends** and **The Backyardigans**, Mike Young Productions' **ToddWorld**

and DreamWorks'

Father of the Pride

are some of the

TV animated

shows of the year.

Craig McCracken

hits another

homerun with

the popular Flash-animated series **Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends**.

Grown-up toons that make a splash on TV this year are

[adult swim]'s **The Venture Bros.**

and **Squidbillies** and Comedy

Central's **Drawn Together**.

It's a superbusy holiday

season for animated features:

DreamWorks releases **Shark**

Tale (directed by Vicky Jensen,

Bibo Bergeron and Rob

Letterman), while Disney/Pixar

delivers Brad Bird's Oscar-winning **The Incredibles**,

Paramount/Nick has **The SpongeBob SquarePants**

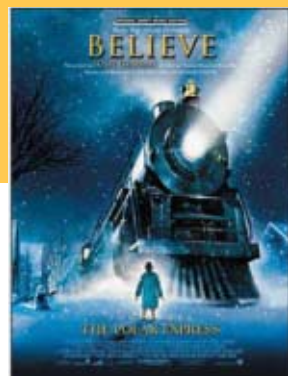
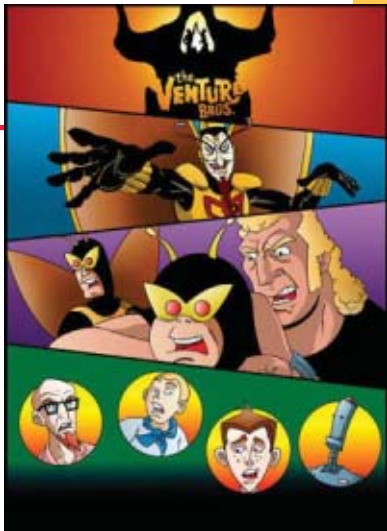
Movie and Sony offers

the Robert Zemeckis'

performance-capture

holiday show, **The Polar**

Express.



Hot Discs for Cold Days

Spring is months away—bring a little sunshine home with you in the latest toon DVD and Blu-ray sets.

by Mercedes Milligan

Pink Panther and Friends Classic Cartoon Collection [MGM, \$69.98]

Now that you've recouped from the holidays, treat yourself with this scrumptious set featuring the coolest cat in animation. Packed into this multi-disc must-have are nine volumes of deliciously retro *The Pink Panther* (1969-1979), totaling over a thousand minutes of slapstick capers. Beyond showcasing the brilliant talents of directors Friz Freleng (series co-creator), Gerry Chiniquy (*Transformers*), Robert McKimson (*Looney Tunes*), George Singer (*The Bullwinkle Show*) and writer John W. Dunn (*Daffy Duck's Quackbusters*), the set sparkles with historic toon moments, such as Oscar winner *The Pink Panther* and the only two cartoons with a verbose Panther: *Sink Pink* and *Pink Ice*.

If you're still feeling the financial crunch, fear not: In addition to the Collection, all nine volumes of the classic cartoon will become available individually for \$14.98, and will include a

Movie Cash coupon for the upcoming theatrical release of *The Pink Panther 2*. Mee-ow! (Oh come on, it's a '70s cartoon, puns are *purr*-fectly appropriate.) [Release date: Jan. 27]

Igor [MGM, \$29.99]

The cuddliest little hunchback around is lurking to disc: Just a few short months after its Halloween ramp-up release, Exodus Group's cute and creepy indie, *Igor*, has arrived to delight (and fright) home audiences. Directed by Anthony Leondis (*Lilo & Stitch 2*) from a script by Chris McKenna (*American Dad!*), *Igor* features a fab voice line up, including titular lead



John Cusack, Steve Buscemi, John Cleese, Sean Hayes, Eddie Izzard, Jennifer Coolidge, Jay Leno and Molly Shannon.

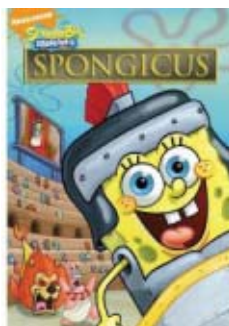
Accompanying this sweet tale about a mad scientist's assistant who just can't get that whole "evil" thing down is a laboratory full of fun extras like an alternate opening; audio commentary from Leondis, McKenna and producer Max Howard; deleted scenes and bloopers; plus the charming *Be An Igor* featurette. This single-disc release is also available on Blu-ray (\$39.98).

[Release date: Jan. 20]

SpongeBob SquarePants – Spongicus [Nickelodeon, \$16.99]

In his latest single-disc outing, Bikini Bottom's most eccentric sea sponge brings more trademark insanity to the underwater metropolis. Featuring the popular season six episode of the same name, this release spotlights SpongeBob and best pal Patrick's hilarious stint as gladiators in a colorful *Sparticus* spoof. Further story lines see Squidward trying to compose music with no help from his neighbors, Plankton starting up a rock band with the boys, Mr. Krab's ever-growing money obsession and SpongeBob getting in touch with his inner, well, sponge!

This release delightfully flaunts the direct-



ing chops of series vets C.H. Greenblatt (*Chowder*), Dan Povenmire (*Phineas and Ferb*) and Sam Henderson (*God Hates Cartoons*)—just the thing to tide you over until Season 6, Vol. 1 hits shelves some time next year.

[Release date: Jan. 27]

Hulk Vs. [Lionsgate, \$19.98]

Marvel throws a one-two punch in this action-packed double feature. *Hulk vs. Wolverine* and *Hulk vs. Thor* deliver just what they imply: A whole lotta face-smashing awesome, as Wolverine dukes it out to stop the Mean Green wreaking havoc in the Canadian countryside, while Thor confronts Hulk in a mythic battle for the safety of Asgard. The one-disc release includes bonuses like commentary by supervising producer/writer Craig Kyle and writer Chris Yost, and first looks at upcoming series *Wolverine and the X-Men* and DVD feature *Thor: Tales of Asgard*, plus trailer gallery.

Vs. is also available as Special Edition (\$24.98) and Blu-ray (\$29.99) sets with even more bone-crushing features. *Wolverine* boasts additional commentary with supe director Frank Paur and story-boarders Kevin Altieri and Butch Lukic; plus making-of and Comic-Con featurettes. *Thor* hammers out commentary with Paur, animation director Sam Liu and color designer James Peters; and making-of and Jack Kirby focus featurettes. Smashing!

[Release date: Jan. 27] ■

Super Spotlight

Grab your capes: Warner Home and DC Comics present the **All-New Super Friends Hour: Season 1, Vol. 2** two-disc collector's edition set on January 27 (\$26.99).



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Pitting Pets vs. the Savages!

Boog, Elliot and the rest of the woodland creatures of *Open Season* return for a wild and wooly sequel.

They're baaaack! It's been over a couple of years since the rowdy woodland animals of Sony Animation's first theatrical release *Open Season* entertained audiences and brought in a healthy \$190 million worldwide. This month, we can revisit the rebellious critters in a direct-to-DVD sequel, which truth be told, holds its own against many recent big-screen extravaganzas.

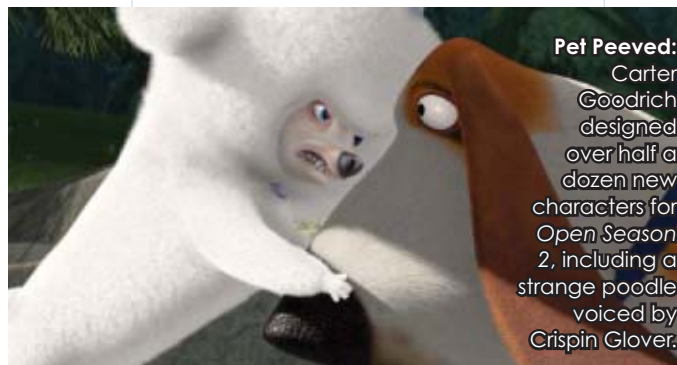
The plot finds Elliot the deer (voiced by *The Soup* host Joel McHale) on his way to marry Giselle (Jane Krakowski), but then Mr. Weenie the pooch (Cody Cameron) is kidnapped by a group of spoiled pets who want to return him to his owners. That leads to a battle royale between the wild animals and the pampered ones.

Directed by Matthew O'Collaghan (*Curious George*, *Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas*) and Todd Wilderman (lead CG character animator on *Stuart Little 2*), the feature works as it takes the characters from the first movie and offers them new adventures and complications, and we get to meet some fresh faces along the way.

As producer Kirk Bodyfelt, who also worked on the first outing, explains, "After *Open Season* continued to perform well on DVD, we

knew that there was more of an interest to do the sequel. Everybody was excited about David Stern's script and we kind of expected that it could go either way—it might be released theatrically or it may go directly to DVD, but we had to make sure the animation was high quality either way."

The producer also points out that although



Pet Peeved: Carter Goodrich designed over half a dozen new characters for *Open Season 2*, including a strange poodle voiced by Crispin Glover.

the initial designs for many of the characters came from the original feature, the team used a completely different pipeline and modeling assets. A large number of new characters were modeled from scratch (using Maya and mental ray), while the team had about 15 months—that's half the standard time for a project of this size—to deliver the goods.

To that end, Sony Pictures Imageworks in Culver City teamed up with its studio in Chennai, India and Dallas-based Reel FX Creative

Studios to produce the film's stylized CG animation for a smaller budget than the first movie.

Of course, similar to live-action sequels, sometimes it's tough to get the original cast to reprise their roles in animated ventures. That's why the producers turned to Mike Epps and Joel McHale to voice the two lead characters, Boog and Elliot, instead of the original's Martin Lawrence and Ashton Kutcher. "You get beyond the fact that new actors are doing these characters, so we were thrilled with the casting," says Bodyfelt. "We decided that we didn't want sound-alikes. Instead, we looked for talent that was able to convey the energy and feel of our leads. A great thing about the sequel is that we also have these new characters, such as Fifi the poodle, who is such an odd, unique animal, and we were lucky to have someone like Crispin Glover in that role, who is just perfect for the voice."

The pivotal task of creating the project's six new characters fell upon designer Carter Goodrich, who was a contributing designer on *Finding Nemo*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Shrek* and *Ratatouille* and also designed the first *Open Season* outing. "When you look at Carter's original designs, they're very close to what we actually ended up using. They were more off-beat and unusual, but they fit in visually so we pretty much went with what he designed."

Producer Amy Jupiter, who has worked on both *Open Season* films, says she's proud of the way the studio uses the latest technologies to support strong stories and compelling characters. "We have new distribution pipelines and have different teams all over the world that help us make films more efficiently. But the essence of what animation does hasn't changed much for the past hundred years. It's still about telling stories."

Bodyfelt also emphasizes the importance of returning to characters that touched a chord with the audience. "I think we offer a great mix of familiar animals and an additional new group that are quite funny and easy to get to know. As we put the domestic pets together with the savage animals, we are celebrating their differences, and at the end, they all come together and reach a common goal." ■

Open Season 2 will be available on DVD, Blu-ray High Def and PSP on January 27.

SCHOOL GUIDE

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9



Aclaimed indie animator Ralph Bakshi (*Fritz the Cat*) gave a captivated audience some sound advice about making it in the toon business at last year's Comic-Con. "If I were young, I'd get a bunch of animators together and we'd make our own movie in just one year using computers," he said. "We'd starve for a year or two, but so what? That's what I would do. Draw badly, draw well, have great ideas, just do your own film."

Of course, before jumping in to get that film started, it would be smart to polish your craft and learn as much as possible about the art and history of animation. It won't hurt to take a couple of business classes to find out how to thrive in the market and learn how to work the latest tech tools that will make life easier and improve chances with future employers. As the world prepares to face the realities of a tough economic period, it may be the right time to attend some of the great animation and visual effects schools in the U.S. and abroad. That's why we hope this annual guide will help prospective students seek the programs and educational institutes that best match their financial, academic and future career goals. Once they build that solid foundation, they can listen to the wise words of Mr. Bakshi and create those great animated projects that will inspire the next generation of toon lovers.

The information found in this guide is regularly updated on the magazine's website at www.animationmagazine.net/schools.html.



Clockwise from top: Gobelins' award-winning student short *Oktapodi*, Ringling grad Evan Mayfield's *The Visionary*, Student Oscar-winner Nicole Mitchell's *Zoologic*, CalArts experimental animation co-director Laura Heit with student Nicole Emmons.

"Sheridan grads are better prepared to succeed in industry because they've learned the basics of art and visual language in communication and can apply them to the mechanics of animation."

Dennis Turner, Alumnus/Faculty

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Film still from Ride in the Sky by Sarah Jargstorf.

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Sheridan

Six Classes That Make the Grade

A brief sampler of key animation classes in North America.

by Ellen Wolff

Surveying educators across North America about key classes they teach yields an interesting glimpse of where the creative community is headed. These teachers are prepping the next wave of talent that will join studios large and small, so the skills being taught today will shape the industry tomorrow. Their sampling of classes also reveals the increasingly fluid boundaries between animated and visual effects filmmaking, and how today's students are benefiting from a knowledge of both.

School: University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts [Los Angeles, CA]

Class: Intro to Film Graphics and Animation

Level: Undergraduate

Teacher: Shelly Wattenbarger (a.k.a. Trixy Sweetvittles)

Class Size: 15 Students

This class provides the first taste of hands-on animation for many USC students,

USC students get hands-on experience.



and it attracts enrollees campus-wide. They're challenged to create several short projects using everything from cut-outs to puppets and pixilation to sand. "No digital techniques are allowed, except for editing," says Wattenbarger, who's been teaching the course since 2003. Covering a range of styles used by Ub Iwerks, Norman McLaren, Terry Gilliam, Oskar Fischinger, Jan Svankmajer



Trixy Sweetvittles

and Nick Park, she says, "My objective is to encourage experimentation."

In making their own shorts, students have to be ingenious, sometimes shooting "multi-plane" animation using sheets of glass propped up with film cores. Wattenbarger notes, "For stop motion we just use Lunchboxes and old VHS cameras, and it's funny to hear students ask: 'What are *these*?' " But she's seen this course have powerful impacts. "There was a computer science major who was nervous because he couldn't draw, but he ended up being one of my best students at animating found objects. He's now thinking about becoming an animation major!"

School: Sheridan School of Animation, Arts and Design [Toronto, Ontario]

Class: Action Analysis - Animation and Design

Level: Second Year Undergraduate

Teachers: Mark Mayerson and Peter Emslie

Class Size: 22-25 Students

Learning how to create a believable character performance is the focus of this course co-taught by animator Mark Mayerson and character designer Peter Emslie. Their series of "animation calisthenics" exercises focuses on the analysis of action, working from squash and stretch and the mechanics of walks to facial expressions and lip sync. Students are free to choose their techniques for designing and animating their original characters, Mayerson explains. "If they want to use our Adobe Suite, it's available. And we use the pencil test software Flipbook. Whether students do 2D or 3D, this course is built around princi-

Created by second-year Sheridan student Jean Park.



ples that apply regardless of technique."

After five years of teaching at Sheridan, Mayerson observes, "Students grow enormously during this second year. When a new class comes along and I choose examples from prior students, I naturally gravitate to students that I know did well. But when I look at the work those students did at the beginning of this class, I'm shocked at how poor it was compared to what they did at the end. Skills coalesce during second year classes."

School: New York University, Tisch School of The Arts [New York, NY]

Class: Storyboarding

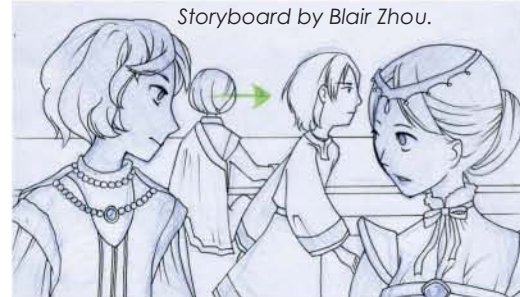
Level: Intermediate to Advanced Undergraduate

Teacher: David Zung

Class Size: 12 Students

When Oscar-winning animator John Canemaker designed this class for the NYU Animation program that he chairs, students flocked to it. The course's perennial popularity among both animation and live-action students has led the university to offer three distinct sections, one of which is taught by professional storyboard artist David Zung. He uses sto-

Storyboard by Blair Zhou.



ryboards from directors as varied as Alfred Hitchcock, Ridley Scott, John Lasseter and Akira Kurasawa to show students how key sequences get put together.

Students also create their own story-

boards based on fairy tales, news clippings or original ideas. "Since my background is animation, I want them to board out sequences pretty thoroughly, so they understand how to create transitions," explains Zung, a five-year NYU veteran. "I don't grade according to drawing skills. They can draw a stick figure as long I can tell where the character is in space. Students might not become storyboard artists, but they'll be working with those artists. This class helps them understand the process, and what's required of a storyboard artist—and why they should be thankful if they ever get to hire one!"

School: Ringling College of Art and Design [Sarasota, FL]

Class: Junior 3D

Level: Third Year Undergraduate

Teacher: Heather Thomson

Class Size: 13-15 Students

By the time 3D animation students reach junior year at Ringling, they're focusing on creating one character per semester

Third-year student Greg Facsko's "Push/Pull" exercise.



Heather Thomson

that they can take through modeling, rigging, animating, texturing, lighting and lip sync. Teacher Heather Thomson, who's taught this class for eight years, says, "By this point, students are ready to focus on the more artistic side of things. We encourage them to see their character as an actor who can play different roles."

While Thomson's students create final animations in Autodesk Maya, they can design their characters using Flash or Photoshop or whatever method they wish. "Ringling isn't a technical school; it's character animation school. Students have to get over the hump of technology, but it's about creating art." Thomson,

herself a Ringling graduate who's done animation for clients like Disney, Universal, ABC and PBS, sees this class as an opportunity to teach professionalism. "I tell them, 'Think of me as your supervisor at work.' We try to mirror the industry as much as possible so when they get to a job they're not in shock!"

School: Savannah College of Art and Design [Savannah, GA]

Class: Character Look Development

Level: Graduate

Teacher: Bridget Gaynor

Class Size: 10-18 students

It's surely a sign of the times that Character Look Development now warrants its

Character by SCAD grad Neil Helm, now at Pixar.



Bridget Gaynor

own class. "Look development was new in the industry until fairly recently," observes Bridget Gaynor, who came to SCAD four years ago following nine years at Rhythm & Hues. "This class was developed to echo what's happening in the industry." Gaynor, who worked on furred creatures in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, explains, "I teach how to make 3D characters look authentic, whether they're photoreal or stylized. This is a graduate level course, so students already know how to model complex characters. In this class they learn how to give characters dynamic surface textures like skin, scales or fur. A big part of our focus is on characters' eyes—how, if they appear to be wet, they convey much stronger emotions."

Gaynor's students work primarily with Autodesk Maya and MAXON Body Paint 3D to create the look for their digital characters. Her course attracts animation and illustration students as well as those specializing in visual effects, and

she notes, "If animation students understand what happens to a character when it is surfaced, that only makes their animation better. I like to remind students that these skills are complementary, and that Pixar is a member of the Visual Effects Society!"

School: Ex'pression College for Digital Arts [Emeryville, CA]

Class: Group Project

Level: Advanced Undergraduate

Teacher: Thierry DiDonna

Class Size: 12-18 Students

This course represents a new experiment for Ex'pression, according to Andrew Schluskel, director of animation & visual effects. "We've created a course where a director presents the class with a script, an asset list and a production schedule. The students then 'apply' for positions and spend five weeks working solely on this project. They'll be graded on quality, timeliness and how well they work as a team."



Ex'pression students work together on DiDonna's Stone project.

This class launches with a short conceived by Thierry DiDonna, a *Happy Feet* animator who teaches animation and motion capture at Ex'pressions. "It's a surreal piece, along the lines of Chris Landreth's *Ryan*," he explains. Noting the contributions by Seneca College students to *Ryan*, DiDonna believes, "It's a great working model. These students have the skills to bring this idea to the level of realism that I'd like to see. The hope is that they'll create quality assets which they can use on their reels." Ex'pression is planning nine such projects per year, and Schluskel says, "I'm looking for compelling proposals from teachers and industry veterans who can bring their experience to our classes. I think it could be a win-win situation for our students and the community at large." ■

Ellen Wolff is a Los Angeles-based journalist who specializes in animation, vfx and education.

scad.edu/animation

Zach Parrish, B.F.A., animation, 2007, *Carried Away*, character.



characters reign.

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John Lasseter's Seven Creative Principles

In a recent article in the German news magazine, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (South German Newspaper), Disney/Pixar's chief creative officer discussed seven creative principles that have helped him realize his visions for his animated movies. We thought the School Guide would be the perfect opportunity to share these valuable points with our readers:

1. Never come up with just one idea. "Regardless of whether you want to write a book, design a piece of furniture or make



Cars

an animated movie: At the beginning, don't start with just one idea—it should be three. The reason is simple: If a producer comes to me with a proposal for a new project, then usually he has mulled over this particular idea for a very long time. That limits him. My answer is always, 'Come again when you have three ideas, and I don't mean one good and two bad. I want three really good ideas, out of which you cannot decide the best—you must be able to defend all three. Then we'll decide which one you'll realize.'

"Creative people often focus their whole attention on one idea. So, right at the beginning of a project, they unnecessarily limit their options. Every creative

person should try that out. You will be surprised how this requirement suddenly forces you to think about things you hadn't even considered before. Through this detachment, you suddenly gain new perspectives. And believe me, there are always three good ideas. At least."

2. Remember the first laugh. "A big problem in the creative process is related to the enhancement of your ideas. Revising, re-touching, refining is very important, but it carries a danger. If you have a story, a joke, a thought, which you write down, it loses its effect over time. It wears itself out. When you hear a joke for the second time you still laugh heartily, on the third or fourth occasion already less so, and when you hear it the 100th time, you hate it.

"I say to my writers: 'Take notice of the first laugh, write it down if necessary.' At times, this may be bothersome, but it is important. Many times, good things got lost because people could not remember anymore how it felt when they heard the idea for the first time."

3. Quality is a great business plan, period.



Ratatouille

"There is a crucial rule: No compromises. No compromises on quality—regardless of production constraints, cost constraints or a deadline. If you get a better idea, and this means that you have



John Lasseter

to start again from scratch, then that's what you have to do. In any creative industry, quality is the sole business plan that prevails in the long run. Many managers fail to understand that, but the audience understands it. The process is only finished once the creative professional in charge says it's finished. That does not mean that there isn't



WALL•E

any pressure—there's pressure all the time anyway—but the individual creator always needs to have the last word."

4. It's all about the team. "One of the most popular questions is always whether groups are more creative than individuals. My answer: In most cases, it's the team—provided you follow certain rules. As a manager, it is my task to abolish hierarchies. It doesn't matter at all who has the idea; that's a very important rule for us. The group must be honest, direct, and endeavour to sincerely help the creative individual. But in the end, nothing that the group says is binding."

continued on page A8



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John Lasseter

continued from page A6

5. Fun invokes creativity, not competition. "There is this idea that you put two people, who cannot stand each other, into a room, hoping that all this negative energy leads to a creative result. I disagree. Cooperation, confidence and fun—that is the way. Creative people must believe

that all others support them in making a great movie. They need to believe that all people involved understand what they are talking about. Creative people are easily bored, moody, a bit difficult to handle. You have to make it fun for them, care for them. Creative people only produce really good work if you creatively challenge them. They have to like what they're working on. They have to be damn proud of the fact that they're a part of a particular project. That is again the manager's task. Each time, you



Bolt

have to give them creative challenges. That's difficult, but nobody said it was easy to lead creative people."

6. Creative output always reflects the person on top. "Poor managers harm the creative process. Laughter, being crazy, freaking out and being silly are hard work. A manager who spreads his bad mood and who forbids his employees to have fun impairs their creativity, and thus harms the enterprise. I would

fire him. I cannot risk so much money just because a manager indulging in his bad mood harms my business."

7. Surround yourself with creative people you trust. "Bring only those new members into your creative team whom you consider to be at least as talented as you. If they are also pleasant and good-natured, even bet-

ter. Most managers don't follow this approach, as they are insecure. Insecurity and creativity do not get along with each other well. Most managers surround themselves with yes men, and as a result, audiences get bad movies." ■

The English version of this article was published in *Bangkok Post* with comments and translation by Dr. Detlef Reis, a lecturer on Business Creativity and Innovation Leadership at the College of Management, Mahidol University.



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Light House render by Ryan Bickston and a finalist in CGTalk's October Lighting Challenge
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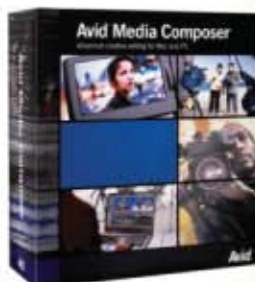
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"classroom," Cineversity, offers free and subscription-based training, education resources and a wealth of artist-provided video tutorials—over 200 hours worth, with new ones being developed regularly—making it one of the most comprehensive 3D animation resources around.

Its most valuable tools, Cineversity's video tutorials found in the "Online Training" section demonstrate the execution of a given project as it appears through the application's interface, accompanied by a voice-over instructor to guide the trainee step-by-step to completion. The site also boasts forums to discuss tips and tricks with

fellow students or teachers. If you're looking for something a bit more serious, the "Hands-On Training" section offers a comprehensive list of brick and mortar educational institutions who offer MAXON training. Users can search by location, curriculum, degrees offered and more to find the right program for them.

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"As the title suggests, Toon Boom Animate is built with one type of user in mind - the animator. The way it works simply makes sense, and it took me about as much time to learn as it did to open the box. Like many digital artists, I use a variety of software packages in my productions, and Animate has already become a mainstay in my toolbox. "
Aaron Simpson, Founder of ColdHardFlash.com and Lineboil.com

TOON BOOM
toonboom.com

Paris, France
T: +33 (0) 1 40 18 77 90

School Anniversaries in 2009

125 Years

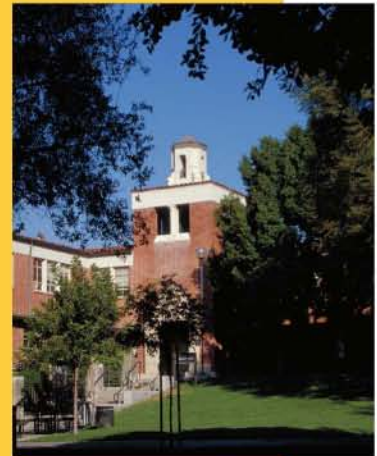
Woodbury University: A First-Rate Institution in its Second Century

Nestled in the crux of our industry in Burbank, Calif. (just shy of Los Angeles) is a campus with a peculiar distinction: It belongs to a distinguished animation program at a school that pre-dates animation! Founded in 1884, Woodbury University has evolved its admirable mission to bring quality education to students from all walks of life into a formula which churns out capable grads for the animation industry. Small class sizes and a faculty made up of active industry pros ensure that the University's recently minted School of Media, Culture & Design prepares students who are both creative and critical thinkers for entry into the entertainment industries. Recent graduates have landed spots with *Coraline* crafters LAIKA and local magic-makers Entify FX, proving the university has got what it takes to compete with any \$40k-a-year art school.

The School of Media, Culture & Design currently boasts five departments: Animation, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Communications and Psychology. Woodbury's animation and design programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design—a big honor for a small university. No doubt staffing industry vets like Emmy-winning art director Ric Heitzman (*PeeWee's Playhouse*), who has signed on to teach a stop-motion animation class, animator Eddie Rosas (*The Simpsons*), who teaches storyboarding, and video/animation hybrid artist Angela Diamos, who teaches an introduction to 2D computer animation class and previously did special effects for Disney, Apogee and Robert Abels is a huge attraction for animation enthusiasts. Even chair Dori Littell-Herrick, who runs the Junior Studio group project, has experience as a commercial A.D. on 2D and 3D animated commercials and as a creative producer for Warner Bros. Feature Animation. As well as these key specialty courses, the School provides all incoming students with a firm comprehension of art and design fundamentals—essential to succeeding in these creative industry majors.

Perhaps the most important thing that the school provides for its students is something staff like to call the Woodbury Miracle. Nearly every applicant is accepted in to the program, and the dedicated faculty and time-tested practices at Woodbury help them achieve a standard of education and a quality of skill that stacks up to schools with more tight-fisted admissions. Many of the University's graduates have been first-generation college students from low-income families who have used their education to advance themselves beyond anyone's expectations. From its origins with the first business school in the west, to its current state as a multi-disciplinary university with highly regarded design, animation and architectural programs, Woodbury has always served as a representation to the communities that it serves, and as a gateway to a brighter future.

Website: www.woodbury.edu



15 Years

Vancouver Film School at 15: A Terrific Training Ground for Future Stars of Animation

Creating magic in animation requires many things of the artist: Patience, talent, innovation, enthusiasm ... but the main attributes of a great animator are a desire to push the boundaries of the art, and the knowledge of what those boundaries are and how best to exploit them. Before you can be the next Bill Plympton, you first must learn to bounce a ball—on paper, that is. That is where upstanding educational centers like the **Vancouver Film School** come in. VFS's **Classical Animation Program** has given its students the instruction they need to turn their raw talent into working skills (and some awesome reels) for the last 15 years. This intensive one-year program—helmed by a team of instructors with tons of industry experience, including renowned artist Marv Newland (*Anijam*, *Bambi Meets Godzilla*)—takes students from the pencil-and-paper basics of life drawing, composition and character design, through instruction on the latest technologies like Flash and Toon Boom's Opus and Harmony, and ends with the completion of a festival-ready animated short.

You may scoff at the accelerated schedule ("One year? But when will they have time to take Accounting for Animators 101 or Conversational German for Cartoonists?"), but the Classical circuit has churned out hordes of animators who have moved on to major projects and lit up screens at festivals all over the world. Alumni have nabbed credits on projects like TV's *Family Guy* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*, Marjane Satrapi's Oscar-nominated *Persepolis*, even high-tech CG flicks like *TMNT*. Last year, student shorts from VFS played at festivals from Toronto to Hiroshima, and Choom Lam's *In the Beginning* nabbed the student prize at Animation Block Party. Readers may also recognize Ben Meinhardt's student work: The slightly demented *Dancing Animals in Love*, which has been picked up by MTV for series development. You can keep up with the latest work coming out of VFS on its top-ranking YouTube channel.

Website: www.vfs.com | www.youtube.com/user/VancouverFilmSchool

VFS

Vancouver Film School alumni credits include **Across the Universe** Geeta Basantani, Digital Compositor **Alias** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Ant Bully** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Rani Naamani, Animator | Ernesto Bottger, Character Animator **AVP: Alien Vs. Predator** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Babel** Luis Blackaller, Storyboard Artist | Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Supervisor **Battlestar Galactica** Daniel Osaki, Lead Modeler | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Blizzard Entertainment** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist **Bolt** Lino Di Salvo, Supervising Animator/Voice of Vinnie **Charlotte's Web** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Tony Etienne, Lead Lighter | Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Chicago** Lon Molnar, Animation Supervisor **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** Kristin Sedore, Lighter | Shawn Walsh, Lighter | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator **The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian** Andreas Hikel, Pre-Visualization Artist | Christoph Schinko, Character Animator | Jami Gigot, Senior Layout Artist **Cloverfield** Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization Supervisor **Constantine** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **The Dark Knight** Pietro Ponti, Lead CG Lighting Artist **Dead Like Me** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Diablo III** Alvaro Buendia, Cinematic Artist | Steven Chen, Cinematic Artist **Family Guy** Michael Loya, Storyboard Artist **Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer | Jessica Alcorn, Compositor **Flags of our Fathers** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Gears of War (VG)** Scott Dossett, Animator **The Godfather (VG)** Kirk Chantraine, Motion Capture Specialist **The Golden Compass** Adam Yaniv, Animator | Chad Moffitt, Animator | Thom Roberts, Animator | Ben Sanders, Animator | Andrew Lawson, Animator | Matthias Lowry, Visual Effects | Tony Etienne, Look Development | Justin Hammond, Lighter Pearl Hsu, Effects Technical Director | Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Fion Mok, Matchmove Artist **Hairspray** Lon Molnar, Visual Effects Production Executive **Halo 3** Bartek Kujbida, Character Animator **Happy Feet** Ben Sanders, Character Animator Thom Roberts, Character Animator **Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban** Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix** Pietro Ponti, Technical Director **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince** Harry Mukhopadhyay, Lead Effects Technical Director **Hellboy** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Hellboy II: The Golden Army** Christoph Ammann, 3D Sequence Supervisor **Horton Hears a Who** Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director | Brent Wong, Modeler **Hulk** Geoff Richardson, Visual Effects Editor **I, Robot** Daniel Osaki, CGI Modeler | Megan Majewski, Pre-Visualization **Ice Age: The Meltdown** Ben Sanders, Character Animator Arun Ram-Mohan, Lighting Technical Director **The Incredible Hulk** Shawn Walsh, Visual Effects Executive Producer | Tony Etienne, Look Development Lead **Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull** Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director **Iron Man** Adam Marisett, Visual Effects Artist **King Kong** Chad Moffitt, Senior Animator **King of the Hill** Michael Loya, Director **Kingdom Hospital** Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Kingdom of Heaven** Shawn Walsh, Digital Compositor **Letters from Iwo Jima** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Live Free or Die Hard** Jessica Alcorn, Compositor **Lord of the Rings Trilogy** Chad Moffitt, Senior Animator **Lost** Scott Dewis, Visual Effects Artist **Lucasfilm Animation Singapore** Sandro Di Segni, Senior Effects Technical Director/Lead Digital Artist | Ming Chang, Lighting Technical Director | Adrian Ng Chee Wei, Character Animator Seema Gopalakrishnan, CG Software Developer **Mass Effect (VG)** Sung-Hun (Ryan) Lim, 3D Modeler **Matrix: Revolutions** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Shawn Walsh, Color & Lighting Technical Director **Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World** Robert Bourgeault, CG Artist **Metal Gear Solid 4 (VG)** Josh Herrig, Artist | Yuta Shimizu, Artist **The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Night at the Museum** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Adam Yaniv, Character Animator | Chad Moffitt, Animator | Kristin Sedore, Lighter **Persepolis** Marianne Lebel, Animator **Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End** Ben Sanders, Character Animator | Allen Holbrook, Animator | Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie** Mike Dharney, Animation Supervisor **Reign of Fire** Lino DiSalvo, Animator **Resident Evil: Extinction** Joshua Herrig, Visual Effects Artist **Robots** Arun Ram-Mohan, Additional Lighting **Rome** Teh-Wei Yeh, Matchmove Artist **The Santa Clause 2** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor | Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist **Scarface (VG)** Maya Zuckerman, Mocap 3D Generalist **Shrek the Third** Rani Naamani, Animator **Shrek the Third (VG)** Samuel Tung, Technical Artist **Sin City** Michael Cozens, Lead Animator **Smallville** Geeta Basantani, Lead Compositor **Speed Racer** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor **Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith** Andrew Doucette, Character Animator | Nicholas Markel, Pre-Visualization **Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (VG)** Arun Ram-Mohan, 3D Artist | Jessica Mih, Level Artist **Stargate SG-1** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositing Artist | Daniel Osaki, Visual Effects Artist | Shawn Walsh, Digital Effects Supervisor **Stargate: Atlantis** Daniel Osaki, 3D Animator | Megan Majewski, 3D Animator | Alec McClymont, 3D Artist **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** Jami Gigot, Concept Artist **Transformers** Allen Holbrook, Animator | Henri Tan, Creature Technical Director **Unreal Tournament III (VG)** Scott Dossett, Artist **Valiant** Robert Bourgeault, Lighting Technical Director **Viva Pinata** Megan Majewski, Animator **WALL-E** Mark Shirra, Layout Artist **Watchmen** Jelmer Boskma, Previs Modeler | Lon Molnar, Visual Effects

Your name here.

3D ANIMATION & VISUAL EFFECTS | CLASSICAL ANIMATION | DIGITAL CHARACTER ANIMATION
Vancouver Film School. Countless paths. vfs.com/animationvfx

Supervisor | Cynthia Rodriguez del Castillo, Visual Effects Artist **World of Warcraft: Burning Crusade (VG)** Carman Cheung, Animator **A Wrinkle in Time** Aruna Inversin, Digital Compositor and many more.

VFS student work by Jeff Plamondon

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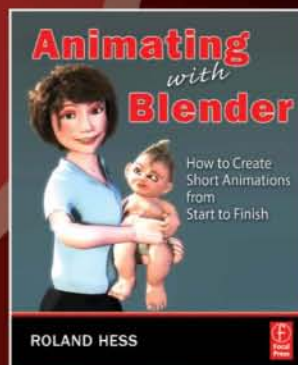
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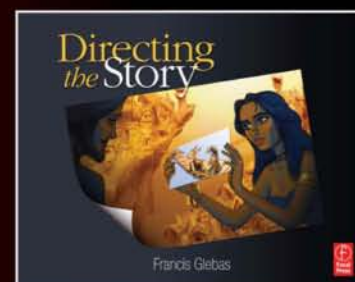
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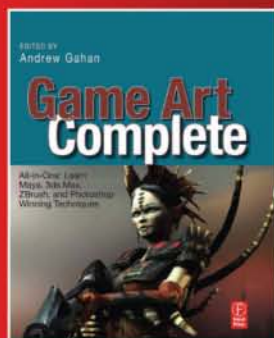
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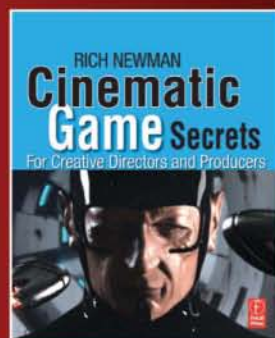
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School Guide 2009

UNITED STATES

3DTraining.com

New York, NY

Phone: 1-877-RING-3DTi

Fax: 212-967-7971

E-mail: info@3dtraining.com

Website: www.3dtraining.com

Degrees/certificates offered:

Certificate and Diplomas offered in 3D Animation and Design

Number of students in animation program: Approx. 30 – 40 per month

Cost of program: \$950 - \$4,650

Head of animation: Bobby Roy

Head of admissions: Brian Wilson

Time of year offered: New classes start every month

Application deadline: Two weeks prior to selected start date

Equipment: Students must have a computer and access to high speed Internet

Abram Friedman Occupational Center

Los Angeles, CA

Phone: 626-419-6953

E-mail: Daniel_Manahan@RoadRunner.com

Degrees/certificates offered:

3D Animation Certificate

Number of students in animation program: 18

Cost of program: \$60 per semester

Head of animation: Daniel Manahan

Time of year offered: Year-round

Application deadline: Open enrollment

Equipment: PC lab with animation and graphics software

Academy of Art University

San Francisco, CA

Phone: 800-544-2787

Fax: 415-618-6287

E-mail: info@academyart.edu

Website: www.academyart.edu

Degrees/certificates offered:

BFA, MFA, AA and Certificate

Number of students in animation program: Approx. 2,000

Cost of program:

Undergraduate: \$670 per unit; Graduate: \$770

Head of animation: Sherrie H. Sinclair and Chris Armstrong, MFA Director: Tom Bertino
Time of year offered: Fall, spring, summer

Equipment: FlipBook, Animo, Lunchbox Synch, Photoshop, Maya, ZBrush

The Animation Academy

Burbank, CA

Phone: 818-848-6590

E-mail: info@theanimationacademy.com

Website: theanimationacademy.com

Degrees/certificates offered:

Certificate for 1 year full time study

Number of students in animation program: 100

Cost of program: \$240 to enter, \$195 to continue

Head of animation: Charles Zembillas

Head of admissions: George Novotny

Time of year offered: Year-round, 6 semesters per year with mid-semester enrollment

Application deadline: End of each month

Equipment: Basics of Character Design, Background Design, Visual Development, Storyboard Fundamentals, we specialize in pre-production design and use a Video Lunchbox for exercises in animation fundamentals. We use two textbooks for our classes, *Controlling Illusion* by Charles Zembillas and *Cinematics Storyboard Workshop* by Gregg Davidson.

Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University

Boston, MA

Phone: 617-585-6710

Fax: 617-585-6720

E-mail: admissions@aiboston.edu

Website: www.aiboston.edu

Degrees/certificates offered:

BFA, MFA, Advanced Professional Certificate in Animation

Number of students in animation program: About 40

Cost of program: Tuition = \$24,825

Head of animation: John Casey

Head of admissions: Bob Gielow

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline:

February 15

The Art Institute of California – Orange County

Santa Ana, CA

Phone: 888-549-3055

Fax: 714-556-1923

E-mail: aicaocadm@aia.edu

Website: www.artinstitutes.edu/orangecounty

Degrees/certificates offered:

Bachelor of Science

Number of students in animation program: 200

Cost of program: \$483/credit

Head of animation: Lawrence Richman

Head of admissions: Timothy Hansen

Time of year offered: Year-round

Application deadline: Rolling admission

Equipment: PC and Mac labs, motion capture lab, AV lab, traditional animation lab

The Art Institute of Las Vegas

Henderson, NV

Phone: 800-833-2678

Fax: 702-992-8564

E-mail: jkerbaugh@aia.edu

Website: www.artinstitutes.edu/lasvegas

Degrees/certificates offered:

Bachelor of Science

Number of students in animation program: 180

Cost of program: \$80,000

Head of animation: Jon Kerbaugh

Head of admissions: Dewey McGuirk

Time of year offered: Year-round

Equipment: HP, Mac – Maya primary software

The Bakshi School of Animation

Silver City, NM

Phone: 575-534-9291

Website: www.thebakshischool.com

E-mail: info@thebakshischool.com

Cost of program: Call for pricing.

Head of animation: Eddie Bakshi

Head of admissions: Jess Gorell

Time of year offered:

Both group and private weekly classes as well as individualized workshops are available throughout the year. Online classes to come.

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT

Phone: 801-422-2064

Fax: 801-422-0654

E-mail: adambs@byu.edu

Website: www.et.byu.edu/animation

Degrees/certificates offered:

BFA

Number of students in animation program: 75

Cost of program: <http://home.byu.edu/webapp/finserve/content/page/Tuition.html>

Head of animation: Kelly Loosli

Time of year offered: Fall

Application deadline: April 1, August 1 for transfer students

Equipment: Maya on Linux Systems, RenderMan, Shake, Adobe Suite, Painter, Animo, Cintiq lab, program screening room; full access to motion picture studio with film, video,

film transfer suite, sound, etc.

California Institute of the Arts

Valencia, CA

Phone: 661-255-1050

Fax: 661-253-7824

Website: www.calarts.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: BFA, MFA

Number of students in animation program: 240

Cost of program: \$32,860

Head of animation:

Experimental Animation: Co-directors Laura Heit and Paul Vester. Character Animation: Interim co-directors Dan Hansen and John Mahoney.

Head of admissions: Molly Ryan

Time of year offered: Sept. through May

Application deadline: January 5

Equipment: 3D Computer Animation labs; 2D Computer Animation labs; pencil testing, audio mixing, sound effects library, DSLR camera kits and camera stands, digital production and post production, stop motion.

California State University Northridge (CSUN)

Northridge, CA

Phone: 818-677-2348

Fax: 818-677-3046

E-mail: mary.a.trujillo@csun.edu

Website: csun.edu/art/viscom

Degrees/certificates

offered: BA Art, Animation Concentration in 3D CG, 2D & Drawing Character & Storyboarding.

Number of students in animation program: 150

Cost of program: \$1,800 per semester

Head of animation: Prof. Mary Ann Trujillo

Head of admissions: Sevet Pirjan, Art Dept. ph. 818-677-2348

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline: November 30

Equipment: 2 animation labs, 50 Macs with 3D CG Maya & 2D Flash, Cintiqs & Wacom, Lunchbox & Digital Shooter, animation drawing tables, life drawing studio

California State University Summer Arts

Long Beach, CA

Phone: 562-951-4060

Fax: 562-951-4982

E-mail: summerarts@calstate.edu

Website: www.csusummerarts.org

Degrees/certificates

offered: Three units of undergraduate or graduate credit per course

Number of students in animation program: 30

Cost of program: \$900

Undergraduate; \$1,104

Graduate; See website for more info

Head of animation: Professor Rick Vertolli

Head of admissions: Joanne Sharp

Time of year offered:

Animation: Character & Story offered June 28 to July 11, 2009

Application deadline: Refer to website in January 2009

Equipment: Refer to website in January 2009

CartoonSupplies

Temecula, CA

Phone: 951-593-5086

Fax: 951-593-5087

E-mail: sales@CartoonSupplies.com

Website: www.CartoonSupplies.com

Degrees/certificates offered:

Teacher training in Traditional Animation and Digital Ink & Paint

Number of students in animation program: Have

trained over 500 teachers

Cost of program: \$600 per one day workshop

Head of animation: Nataha Lightfoot

Head of admissions: Seomii Lightfoot

Time of year offered: By appointment on weekends - Year-round - Teachers only

Application deadline:

By appointment; call for available dates, apply two weeks in advance

Equipment: Pencil test equipment, pro animation stations, Macs and PCs with Retas Pro Software

Center for Digital Imaging Arts at Boston University

Waltham, MA / Washington, DC

Phone: 800-808-CDIA (800-808-2342)

Fax: 781-209-0018

E-mail: info@cdiabu.com

Website: www.cdiabu.com

Degrees/certificates offered:

Certificate (graduate from Boston University's College of Communication)

Number of students in animation program: 100 (12 to 1 student to teacher ratio)

Cost of program: \$22,500

Head of animation: Howard

Kaplan, Program Director

Head of admissions: Kerri Olson, Director of Admissions

Time of year offered: Spring, summer and fall Sessions

Application deadline: Rolling admissions

Equipment: Maya 2009, Mudbox, ZBrush, Adobe Suite - Photoshop, After Effects, Flash, etc.

Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts

Orange, CA

Phone: 714-997-6765

Fax: 714-997-6885

E-mail: dodgecollege@chapman.edu

Website: <http://ftv.chapman.edu>

Degrees/certificates offered:

BFA Digital Arts

Number of students in animation program: 75

Cost of program: \$33,760 per year

Head of animation: Professor Janell Shearer

Head of admissions: Noelle Novoa

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline: Fall: January 15 for freshman, March 1 for transfers; Spring: November 1

Equipment: Production design lab, motion capture stage and foley stage designed by foley experts at Warner Bros.; 34 individual editing rooms and 10 sound suites; Autodesk Lustre, Smmoke and Flame stations; Avid Nitris DS, Nitris Symphony and Media Composer systems; two full-networked computer labs with: Autodesk Maya, Motion Builder and Toxik, Adobe After Effects, Illustrator and Photoshop, Flash, Google SketchUp, Apple VectorWorks, Avid MCSoft, Pro Tools LE with MBOX, Movie Magic Budgeting and Scheduling, Final Draft, Sony Vegas, DVD Architect, Sony Acid and Frame Forge Storyboarding software

Cogswell Polytechnical College

Sunnyvale, CA

Phone: 408-541-0100 or 800-264-7955

Fax: 408-747-0764

E-mail: info@cogswell.edu

Website: www.cogswell.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: BA/BS

Number of students in animation program: 59

Cost of program: \$8,586 per semester full time, \$708 per unit

Head of animation: Michael Huber

Head of admissions: Barb Bloom

Time of year offered: Year-round

Application deadline: Varies

Equipment: Please call

Collin County Community College

Plano, TX

Phone: 972-516-5089

E-mail: tottinger@ccccd.edu

Website: www.ccccd.edu/academicprograms/animation.html

Degrees/certificates offered: Associate of Applied Science and

Certificate in 3D Animation/ Game Art, Graphic Design

Print/Web, Digital Video, Commercial

Photography

Number of students in animation program: 80-100

Cost of program: \$3,200

- \$7,700 for AAS degree (in-state/county vs. out of state)

Head of animation: Tom Ottinger

Head of admissions: Todd Fields, tfields@ccccd.edu

Time of year offered: Fall, spring, summer

Application deadline: See <http://www.ccccd.edu/ps/prospectivestudents.html>

Equipment: Dell & Macintosh computers, each student has dedicated workstation in-class and generous lab time access (3 year equipment cycle); current versions of Maya Unlimited 2009, Mudbox 2009, Final Cut Studio 2, Adobe CS3/4 (all applications)

Columbus College of Art & Design

Columbus, OH

Phone: 614-222-3261

Fax: 614-222-4040

E-mail: rsaks@ccad.edu

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Artwork credits, animated characters above: Amanda Ann Nelson, Media Arts & Animation, Graduate, The Art Institutes International Minnesota. The Art Institutes is a system of over 40 education institutions throughout North America. Degree and program offerings vary by school. A range of online course opportunities is available. Administrative Office: 210 Sixth Avenue, 33rd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222
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Website: www.ccad.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Animation
Number of students in animation program: 180
Cost of program: \$21,000
Head of animation: Ron Saks
Head of admissions: Tom Green
Time of year offered: Full academic year
Application deadline: March 1
Equipment: Full 2D & 3D labs, Apple and Windows platforms, Maya, Modo, Mudbox, Toon Boom, Aftereffects, Flash, etc.

CSU Fullerton Entertainment Art and Animation Program

Fullerton, CA
Phone: 714-278-3471
Fax: 714-278-2390
E-mail: dlamb@fullerton.edu
Website: www.fullerton.edu/arts/art
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Entertainment Art and Animation & Illustration, MA, and MFA in Illustration
Number of students in animation program: 90
 Entertainment Art and Animation majors
Cost of program: Tuition = \$4,000 a year
Head of animation: Professor Dana J. Lamb
Head of admissions: ARSC@fullerton.edu
Time of year offered: Fall and spring semesters and summer session
Application deadline: See website
Equipment: Multiple Mac-based labs with 2D and 3D software

The DAVE School

Orlando, FL
Phone: 407-224-3283
Fax: 407-224-5648
E-mail: info@daveschool.com
Website: www.DaveSchool.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate of Completion; Occupational Associates Degree
Number of students in animation program: 80-120
Cost of program: \$33,500
Head of animation: Jeff Scheetz
Head of admissions: Scottie Graham
Time of year offered: Start dates in January, March, June, and September
Application deadline: Rolling admission

Equipment: LightWave, PC, VICON Motion Capture system

Digital Media Arts College

Boca Raton, FL
Phone: 866-255-3622
Fax: 561-391-2480
E-mail: dmac-leads-adm@dmac.edu
Website: www.dmac.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Computer Animation, BFA Graphic Design, MFA Special Effects Animation, MFA Graphic Design
Number of students in animation program: 300 +/-
Cost of program: \$22,260 per year BFA, \$23,850 per year MFA
Head of animation: Andres Del Valle (Undergrad), David Xu (Graduate)
Head of admissions: Dean Scott Miller
Time of year offered: Spring (January), Summer (June), Fall (September)
Application deadline: 30 days prior to semester start
Equipment: Hardware updated once every 1-2 semesters; 1 MFA Animation lab, 3 BFA Animation labs, 5 Graphic Design labs, edit lab, motion-capture studio, art rooms; hardware includes Dell Precision 530's dual Xeon processor computers, Boxx dual processor computers, Apple G5s, high-def and LCD monitors, high-speed Processors, Nvidia Quadro video cards, digital projectors, scanners and more

Digital Media Lab Academy

Baton Rouge, LA U
Phone: 225-389-7249
Fax: 225-389-7245
E-mail: charlottefruge@advancebr.org
Website: www.advancebr.org/edi
Degrees/certificates offered: High School Diploma
Number of students in animation program: 100 per grade starting in 2010 with an entering class of Freshmen. In 4 years, the school will have 400 students enrolled. The school is focused on digital arts and technology, with animation techniques integrated in the curriculum.
Cost of program: Free of tuition for students (this is our anticipation, but nothing is final yet)

Application deadline: N/A (the school will be opened in 2010)

Digital-Tutors

Oklahoma City, OK
Phone: 405-601-4806
Fax: 405-601-2472
E-mail: bmo@digitaltutors.com
Website: www.digitaltutors.com
Degrees/certificates offered: None, all self-paced training
Number of students in animation program: Over a million online students
Cost of program: From \$50-80
Time of year offered: Year-round

Earthlight Pictures Animation Training and Teletraining

Worldwide via the Internet
Phone: 503-697-7914
E-mail: jt@earthlightpictures.com
Website: www.earthlightpictures.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate
Number of students in animation program: 10-60
Cost of program: Varies widely depending on format selected; call for details
Head of animation: John Teton
Time of year offered: Year-round

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Edinboro, PA
Phone: 814-732-2406
Fax: 814-732-2414
E-mail: eup_admissions@edinboro.edu or arinfo@edinboro.edu
Website: www.edinboro.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Applied Media Arts
Number of students in animation program: 240
Cost of program: \$13,700 resident / \$16,500 non-resident per academic year (includes tuition, housing & fees)
Head of animation: Michael Genz
Head of admissions: J. P. Cooney
Time of year offered: Fall and spring semesters
Application deadline: None
Equipment: Traditional, stop-motion and computer animation

Fashion Institute of Technology

New York, NY
Phone: 212-217-5440
Fax: 212-217-4681
E-mail: Terry_Blum@fitnyc.edu
Website: www.fitnyc.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Computer Animation & Interactive Media
Number of students in animation program: 50
Cost of program: In-state residents: \$4,567 per year, out of state residents \$11,140 per year
Head of animation: Terry Blum
Head of admissions: Elizabeth Grubic
Time of year offered: Fall
Application deadline: March 1
Equipment: HP Platform – Soffimage | XSI, AVID, Adobe Master Suite, Autodesk, etc.

Forsyth Technical Community College

Winston-Salem, NC
Phone: 336-723-0371
Fax: 336-761-2399
E-mail: hburns@forsythtech.edu
Website: www1.forsythtech.edu
Degrees/Certificates offered: AAS in Digital Effects and Animation Technology
Number of students in animation program: 35
Cost of program: \$42 per semester hour
Head of animation: Herbert I Burns 336-734-7342
Head of admissions: Jean Groom 336-734-7492
Time of year offered: Fall, spring and summer semesters
Application deadline: Summer
Equipment: Adobe Master Collection, Toon Boom Digital Pro, Maya 2009, SketchUp, PC based, Wacom sketch tablets, dual flat screen monitors, Next engine 3d Scanner, ABS plastic 3d printer, z-Corp 3d printer

Full Sail University

Winter Park, FL
Phone: 866-226-7625
E-mail: admissions@fullsail.com
Website: www.fullsail.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: Associates, Bachelors, Masters
Number of students in animation program: 880
Cost of program: \$34,775 - \$72,775
Head of animation: Pete Bandstra
Head of admissions: Mary Beth Plank-Mezzo

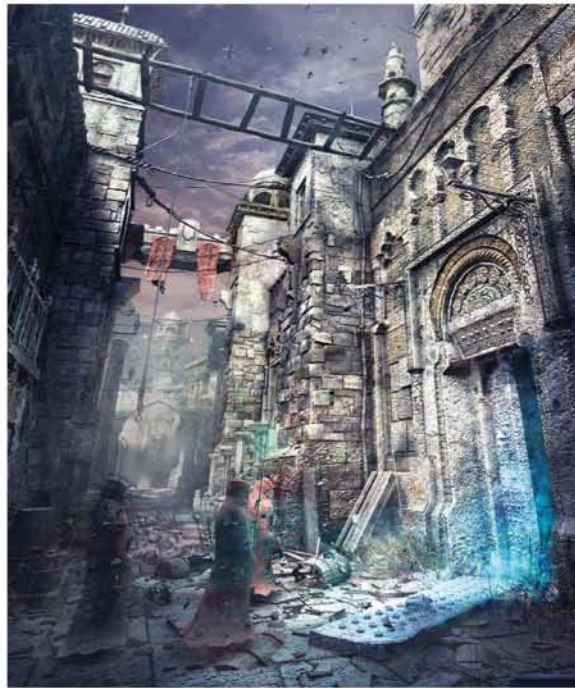


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Artwork by Jaehoon Kim, Animation & Visual Effects Student



Artwork by Sungjae Cho, Animation & Visual Effects Student



Artwork by Diego S. Velasquez, Animation & Visual Effects Student

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105

Accredited member WASC, NASAD, Council for
Interior Design Accreditation (BFA-IAD), NAAB (M-ARCH)

Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: Rolling admissions
Equipment: Motion-capture studio, traditional art studios, powerful computer workstations and software such as Autodesk Maya and Adobe Creative Suite

Gnomon School of Visual Effects

Hollywood, CA
Phone: 323-466-6663
Fax: 323-466-6710
E-mail: info@gnomonschool.com
Website: www.gnomonschool.com
Degrees/certificates offered: High End Computer Graphics Certificate Program
Number of students in animation program: 250
Cost of program: \$45k (2-year program)
Head of animation: Tefft Smith II, tefft@gnomonschool.com
Head of admissions: Brian Bradford, brian@gnomonschool.com
Time of year offered: 4 times a year (quarterly)
Application deadline: www.gnomonschool.com/calendar.php
Equipment: www.gnomonschool.com/experience/facilities/facilities.php

The Guildhall at Southern Methodist University

Plano, TX
Phone: 214-768-9950
Fax: 972-473-3599
E-mail: guildhall@smu.edu
Website: <http://guildhall.smu.edu>
Degrees/certificates offered: Master's Degree in Interactive Technology; Graduate Certification in Game Development
Number of students in animation program: 45 approx.
Cost of program: Master's Degree Program = \$51,000; Graduate Certification Program = \$46,000
Head of animation: Chad Walker and Eric Walker
Head of admissions: Dr. Peter E. Raad
Time of year offered: Fall and spring
Application deadline: Fall semester: April; Spring semester: October

Equipment: Mo-Cap; Each student is given a Dell XPS M1730 production laptop and a Wacom tablet upon admission; 3D Studio Max, Photoshop, Mudbox, Body Paint 3D and Adobe Premier (in the editing facility)

Grand Valley State University

Allendale, MI
Phone: 616-331-5000, 800-748-0246
E-mail: admissions@gvsu.edu
Website: www.gvsu.edu/filmvideo
Degrees/certificates offered: BA, BS Film/Video Production, Animation/New Media Emphasis
Number of students in animation program: 40
Cost of program: \$8,200/yr. resident; \$12,500/yr. non-resident
Head of animation: Deanna Morse and Kim Roberts
Time of year offered: Fall and winter
Application deadline: Rolling
Equipment: 4 Macintosh graphics labs, 3 Video Lunchboxes, a wide array of video production equipment, 16mm film equipment; animation software includes Flash, After Effects and Lightwave 3D

Grossmont College

El Cajon, CA
Phone: 619-644-7000
Fax: 619-644-7922
Website: www.grossmont.edu
Number of students in animation program: 22
Cost of program: \$88/semester - for one class
Time of year offered: Spring and fall
Application deadline: Information and schedule of classes on the website
Equipment: Photoshop Illustrator and Flash

Indiana University School of Informatics Media Arts & Science

Indianapolis, IN
Phone: 317-278-4636
Fax: 317-278-7859
E-mail: info@informatics.iupui.edu
Website: <http://newmedia.iupui.edu>
Degrees/certificates offered: BS, MS in Media Arts & Science
Number of students in animation program:

Undergraduate: 398;
Graduate: 38
Cost of program: \$217.70 per credit, undergraduate/resident. \$259.35 per credit, graduate/resident.
Head of animation: Anthony Faiola, Ph.D., Program Director
Head of admissions: Mark McCreary, Asst. Dean
Time of year offered: Fall, spring and summer terms
Application deadline: Undergraduate: rolling admission per IUPUI schedule; Graduate: January 15 of each year only
Equipment: Digital video/still cameras and audio recorders; mics, light kits, mixers; Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Flash, After Effects, Premiere, Maya, 3ds Max, Final Cut Pro, N-Track, ACID, etc.

Iowa State University

Ames, IA
Phone: 515-294-2089
Fax: 515-294-5530
E-mail: hci@iastate.edu
Website: www.hci.iastate.edu
Degrees/certificates offered: PhD, MS, Online MS, Graduate Certificate, all in Human Computer Interaction
Number of students in animation program: 94 students in the HCI Graduate Program
Cost of program: Resident tuition is about \$9,500 per year
Head of animation: James Oliver, Director of HCI Graduate Program
Head of admissions: James Oliver
Application deadline: January 15, 2009

Lightfoot Ltd, Inc.

Temecula, CA
Phone: 951-593-5165
Fax: 951-593-5166
E-mail: Sales@LightfootLtd.com
Website: www.AnimationSupplies.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Teacher Training in Traditional Animation and Digital Ink & Paint
Number of students in animation program: We have trained over 500 teachers
Cost of program: \$600 per one day workshop
Head of animation: Nataha Lightfoot
Head of admissions: Seomii Lightfoot
Time of year offered: By appointment on weekends -

Year-round - Teachers Only
Application deadline: By appointment; call for available dates, apply two weeks in advance
Equipment: Pencil test equipment, pro animation stations, Macs and PCs with Retas Pro Software

The Los Angeles Film School

Hollywood, CA
Phone: 323-860-0789
Fax: 323-469-4160
E-mail: prmarketing@lafilm.com
Website: www.lafilm.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Associate of Science Degrees in: Computer Animation, Film and Game Production
Cost of program: \$35,000
14-month degree program
Head of animation: Bobby Milly, Computer Animation Program Director
Head of admissions: Rita Sawyer, Vice President of Admissions
Time of year offered: Monthly
Application deadline: Monthly
Equipment: Dell Precision M6400 for all students in program fully loaded with 64bit OS, 1.5gig Nvidia Quadro Card, 4gigs RAM, Dual-core Processors, with Maya2009, Zbrush3.1, and Adobe CS4 preloaded into all students machines; Lab machines: Dell XPS (4) DualCore processor's, 8gigs RAM, 3.5gigs Graphic memory with 21" Cintiq monitors

MAXON Cineversity

Online, U.S.-based
Website: www.cineversity.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Web-based animation and graphics program tutorials and educational resources
Cost of program: Varies; free and subscription-based
Time of year offered: 24/7, 365 days a year

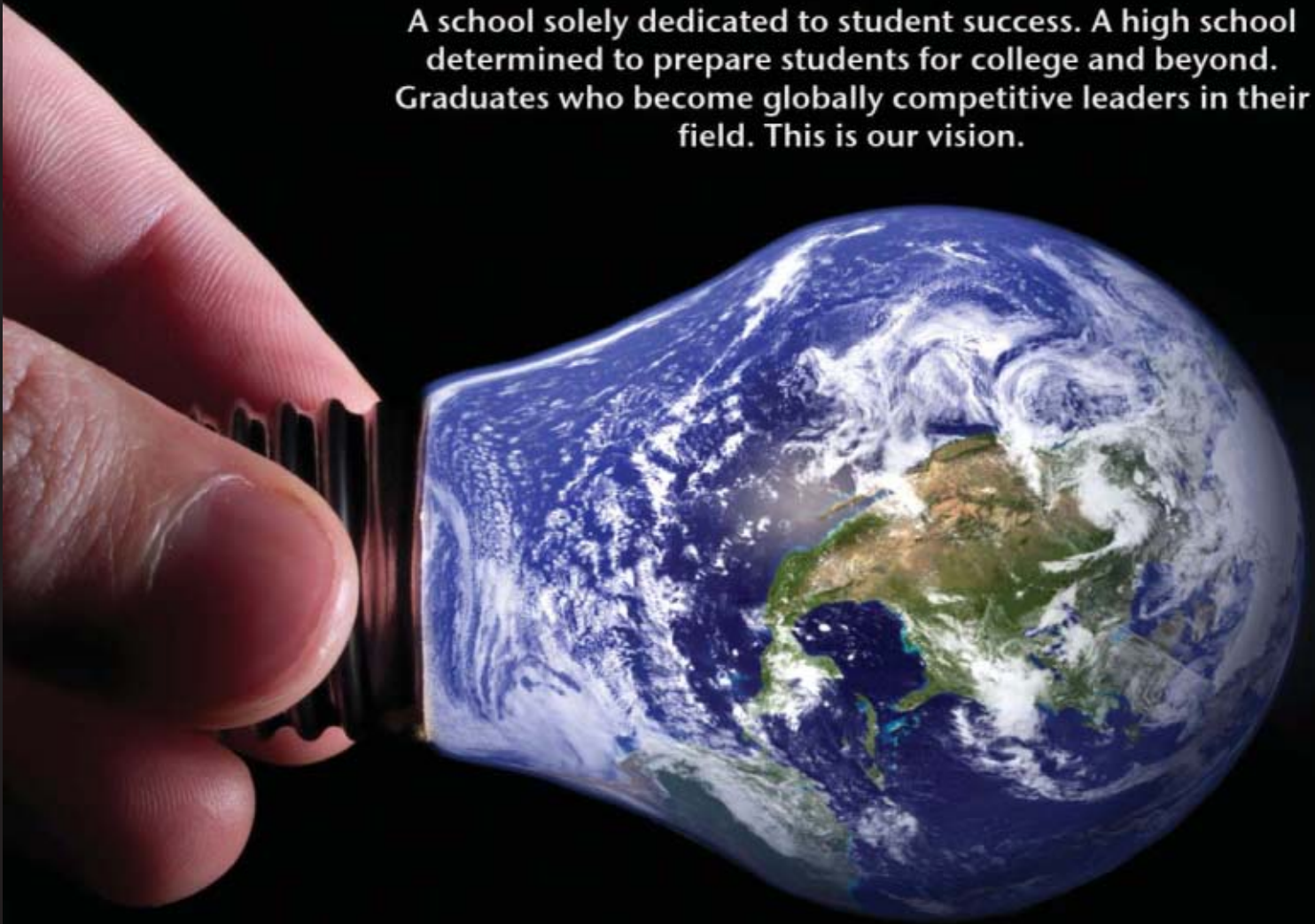
Milwaukee Area Technical College

Milwaukee, WI
Phone: 414-297-6597
E-mail: deckertw@matc.edu
Website: matc.edu/matcmain.html
Degrees/certificates offered: Associate degree
Number of students in animation program: 40
Head of animation: Tim Decker, Brian Mennenoh

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Opening in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the Digital Media Lab Academy will prepare high school students for success in globally competitive digital media fields. Employing a problem-based approach to teaching traditional subjects, this high school will expose students to relevant, cutting-edge industry practices.

Engage yourself in our school, become a leader, teacher, administrator or industry partner. For more information, contact info@advancebr.org or call 225.389.7243 today. Visit us on the web at www.advancebr.org

Head of admissions: James Macdonald
Time of year offered: Sep. - May
Application deadline: August

NC State University, College of Design

Raleigh, NC
Phone: 919-515-3876, 919-515-2029

Fax: 919-515-7330

E-mail: pat_fitgerald@ncsu.edu, susan_brandeis@ncsu.edu

Website: www.ncsudeSIGN.org

Degrees/certificates offered: Bachelor of Art and Design, Master of Art & Design (Animation, New Media and Digital Imaging Concentration)

Number of students in animation program: 18-24 (Track 1 and Track 2)

Cost of program: Tuition+Fees, Out of State: \$35,482/year, In-State: \$5,693/year

Head of animation: Pat FitzGerald, Associate Professor

Head of admissions: Susan Brandeis, Program Director,

Time of year offered: Year-round, semester based studios, summer session courses, online learning through NCSU DELTA as well as Study Abroad (Prague)

Application deadline: For fall 2009: January 5

Equipment: High-end, HD digital video cameras and audio recording equipment, laser cutters (3), Dimension 3D Printer, digital blue screen room and projection rooms; a wide range of animation and interactive software including Maya, Mud Box, Motion Builder, Shake, Final Cut Pro, After Effects, and Flash as well as specialized 3D Match Moving and visual effects software such as TrapCode, PFTrack and Maxwell Render; labs also contain multiple suites of dual-boot, Apple G5s and iMacs with Wacom/Cintiq tablets; recording studio and infrared camera tracking systems

New York Institute of Technology

New York City and Old Westbury, NY

Phone: 212-261-1769 or 516-686-1227

Fax: 516-686-7428

E-mail: pvoci@nyit.edu

Website: www.nyit.edu/finearts

Degrees/Certificates offered:

BFA in Computer Animation, Graphic Design; MFA in 3D Animation, Graphic Design, Art and Technology

Number of students in animation program: 150

Cost of program: See www.nyit.edu

Head of animation: Prof. Peter Voci

Head of admissions: Dr. J. Nealon

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline: August 1

Equipment: Professional motion-capture studio, rapid prototype lab, Cyberware head scanner, large format printers, full sculpture studio (metal/wood/synthetics/casting), four exhibition galleries, 100+ dedicated high-end animation workstations

Northern Michigan University

Marquette, MI

Phone: 906-227-2194

E-mail: art@nmu.edu

Website: <http://art.nmu.edu>

Degrees/certificates offered: BA/BS/BFA. Concentrations in Electronic Imaging and Digital Cinema.

Number of students in animation program: Approx. 40

Cost of program: \$3,200/semester resident; \$5,300/semester nonresident

Head of animation: Stephan Larson

Time of year offered: Spring semesters

Application deadline: August

Equipment: Three equipped Apple labs; DV/HD cameras; lighting studio; green-screen studio; Apple laptops for each student

NYU Tisch School of the Arts Kanbar Institute of Film and Television

New York, NY

Phone: 212-998-1700

Website: <http://filmtv.tisch.nyu.edu>

Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Film

Head of animation: John Canemaker

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Platt (Media Arts) College San Diego

San Diego, CA

Phone: 866-752-8826

Fax: 619-265-8655

E-mail: info@platt.edu

Website: www.platt.edu

Degrees/certificates offered:

BS in Media Arts (emphasis 3D, Graphic Design, Video Production and Web Design); Associate of Applied Science in Graphic Design. Diplomas in 3D, Graphic Design, Video Production and Web Design.

Number of students in animation: 103

Head of animation: Marketa Hancova

Head of admissions: Al Medro

Time of year offered: Every five weeks

Application deadline: None

Equipment: Maya, ZBrush, Boujou, After Effects, Motion Builder, etc.

PRATT MANHATTAN Center for Continuing & Professional Studies Continuing Education

New York, NY

Phone: 212-647-7199 (contact Karen Miletsky, Assoc. Director or Perry Han, Administrative Asst.)

Fax: 212-367-2489

E-mail: prostudy@pratt.edu

Website: <http://ProStudies.pratt.edu>

Certificates offered: Computer

Graphics Certificate in Computer Animation & Video, Interactive Media; Other Computer Graphics certificates offered through continuing education:

Electronic Imaging & Illustration, Electronic Publishing, Computer-Aided Design & Visualization

Number of students in animation programs: 200, plus
Cost of programs: Range from \$150-\$835

Head of Animation: Karen Adler Miletsky

Head of Admissions: Karen Adler Miletsky, Center for Continuing and Professional Studies only

Time of year offered: Fall, spring, summer

Application deadline: Open

Program statement: Our Autodesk® Training Center and Autodesk® Training Center Media and Entertainment offer certificate programs in Computer Graphics. One area of concentration is in Computer Animation and Video for students who wish to pursue careers in film, entertainment, special effects,

game design and broadcast design. Study focuses on the creation and design of time-based media, including 2D and 3D animation, traditional animation, digital video, and broadcast design. Students study the choreography and design of complex animated sequences, such as creation of titling sequences, editing, compositing, modeling, rendering and animation. Final projects are edited to form a demo reel portfolio.

Ringling College of Art and Design

Sarasota, FL

Phone: 941-351-5100; Toll-Free U.S. Only 1-800-255-7695

Fax: 941-359-7517

E-mail: admissions@ringling.edu

Website: www.ringling.edu

Degrees/Certificates offered:

BFA in Advertising Design, Broadcast Design/Motion Graphics (beginning in fall 2009), Computer Animation, Digital Film, Fine Arts, Game Art & Design, Graphic & Interactive Communication, Illustration, Interior Design, Painting, Photography & Digital Imaging, Printmaking, Sculpture; BA in The Business of Art & Design

Number of students in animation program: Computer Animation: 290 (all years); Game Art & Design: 24 (first enrolled class in new program)

Head of animation: Jim McCampbell

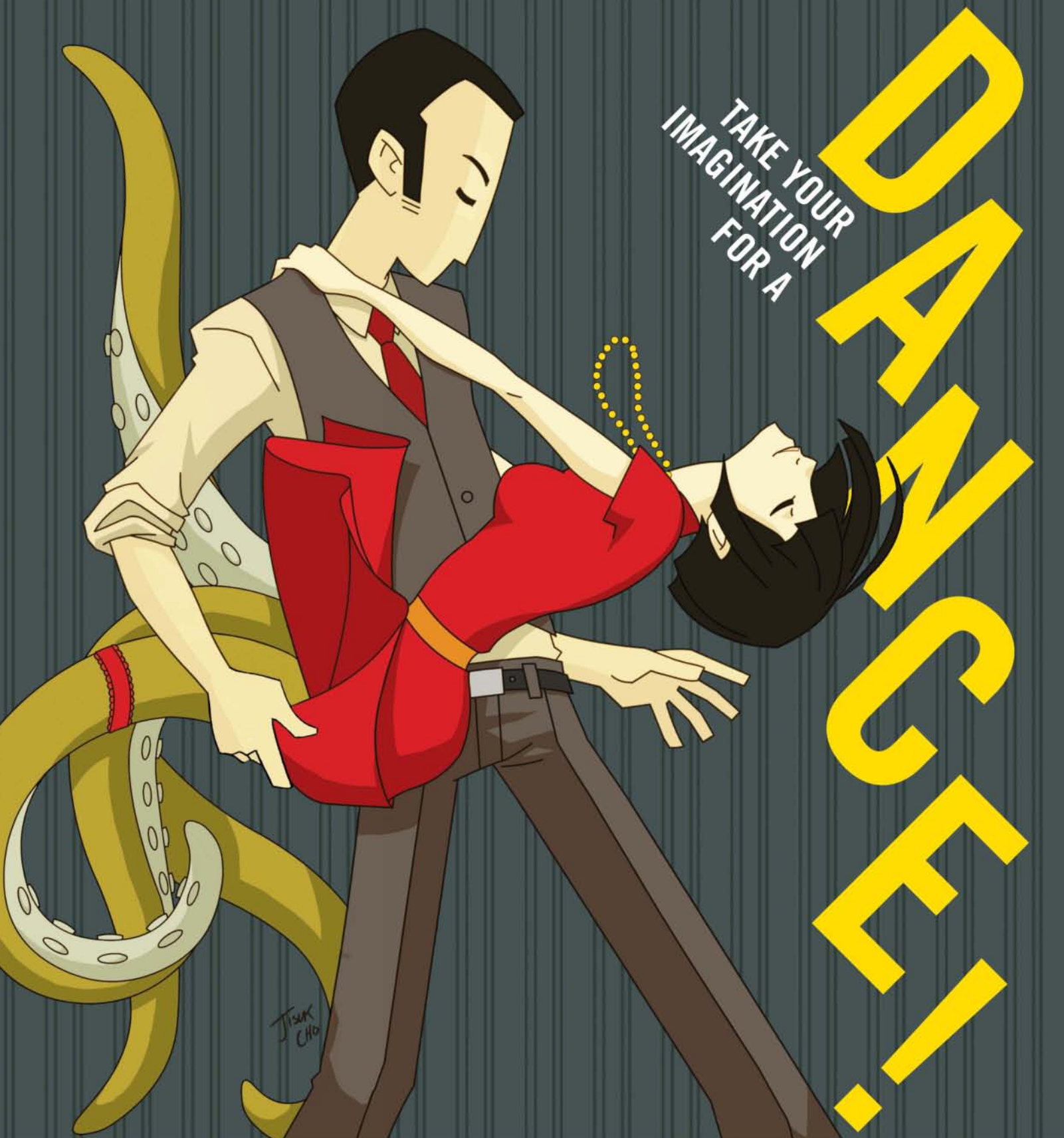
Head of admissions: Jim Dean

Time of year offered: Four-year degree program commencing each fall (semester-based annual program)

Application deadline: January 15 for Computer Animation and Game Art & Design.

Scholarship preference design for all majors is March 1, however no "deadline" for other majors.

Equipment: HP XW9400, featuring: Nvidia quadro fx3500, Saas harddisk, 4GB of RAM, Dual AMD Opteron® 2218 processors, CD, DVD+R and DVD-R Lightscribe burner, 30" HP display. Adobe Acrobat 8, Audition 2.0, Encore CS3, Dreamweaver CS3, Illustrator CS3, InDesign CS3, Photoshop CS3, Premiere Pro CS3, After Effects CS3; InterVideo WinDVD, Microsoft Office 2007, Mozilla FireFox, Roxio Easy CD & DVD Creator, Autodesk Maya 8.5 and

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ANIMATE

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and offer state-of-the-art equipment and software. At SVA, our students are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for the best jobs in animation. Take part in this exciting and burgeoning field. Features, commercials, television, gaming, Internet and mobile technology—we have it all. Now is the time to take that first step and get on the dance floor!

SVA has been preparing students for careers in animation for more than 40 years. Think of your favorite animated film—there's a good chance that one of our alumni was part of the production team.

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San Jose State University, School of Art and Design, Animation/Illustration

San Jose, CA
Phone: 408-924-4392
Fax: 408-924-4326
Website: <http://ad.sjsu.edu>
E-mail: Elizabeth.Briggs@sjsu.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: BFA Animation/Illustration, MA Animation/Illustration

Number of students in animation program: 400

Cost of program: Fees for California residents: Undergraduate - For 1 to 6 units, \$1,357 per semester. For 6.1 or more units, \$1,996 per semester. Graduate - 1 to 6 units, \$1,561 per semester. 6.1 or more units, \$2,242 per semester. Nonresident students (U.S. and foreign) pay the amounts above plus \$339 per unit.

Heads of animation: Alice A. Carter and J. Courtney Granner

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline: <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/admission/appdates.html>

Equipment: 2D and 3D animation labs

Santa Monica College Academy of Entertainment Technology

Santa Monica, CA 90404
Phone: 310-434-3700
Fax: 310-434-3768
E-mail: academy_info@smc.edu or mottler_gloria@smc.edu

Website: <http://academy.smc.edu> or <http://www.smc.edu>

Degrees/certificates offered: Associate of Arts and Animation and Digital Media Certificate Programs

Cost of program: CA resident: \$20 per unit; \$164 - \$195 for out of state students

Head of admissions: Kiersten Elliott, Enrollment Services

Time of year offered: Fall and spring with two 8 week sessions in winter and summer

Application deadline: Continuous

Equipment: Software: Maya, Houdini, Flash, After Effects,

Final Cut Pro, ProTools, Adobe Suite and Zbrush; Hardware: 150 Windows, 130 Macintosh and web resources for student sites

School of Communication Arts

Raleigh, NC
Phone: 919-488-8500
Fax: 919-488-8490
E-mail: school@higherdigital.com
Website: www.higherdigital.com

Degrees/Certificates offered: Associate in Applied Science in Digital Animation, Digital Advertising & Design, Digital Filmmaking; Certificate in Digital Animation, Advanced Digital Animation, Digital Media Arts, Internet Site Development, Digital Filmmaking I & II

Number of students in animation program: 89

Cost of program: Associates in Digital Animation - \$42,000; Certificate in Digital Animation - \$16,352 (Advanced Digital Animation - \$16,352)

Head of animation: Mr. Kwame Hawkins, MFA

Head of admissions: Ms. Debra Ann Hooper

Time of year offered: Quarterly

Equipment: Windows XP-based 3D workstation running Autodesk Maya

School of Film and Animation Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester, NY
Phone: 585-475-6175
Fax: 585-475-7575
E-mail: mqbpph@rit.edu
Website: <http://cias.rit.edu/~sofa>

Degrees/certificates offered: BFA, Film and Animation; MFA, Animation

Number of students in animation program: 100 undergraduate, 30 graduate

Cost of program: \$27,000 undergraduate fulltime/year; \$30,000 graduate fulltime/year

Head of animation: Professor Stephanie Maxwell

Head of admissions: Daniel Shelley, undergraduate; Diane Ellison, graduate

Time of year offered: 3 quarters - fall, winter and spring (summer quarter courses are available for program credit)

Application deadline:

Undergraduate program - December 1, early decision; February 1, regular deadline. Graduate program - February 1

Animation: Traditional, stop motion, experimental, hybrid and 2D and 3D computer animation; also, digital video/HD, film, and craft specialties

School of Visual Arts

New York, NY
Phone: 212-592-2100, 800-436-4204
Fax: 212-592-2116
E-mail: admissions@sva.edu
Website: www.sva.edu

Degrees/certificates offered:

BFA in Advertising; Animation; Cartooning; Computer Art, Computer Animation & Visual Effects; Film & Video; Fine Arts; Graphic Design; Illustration; Interior Design. MFA in Computer Art; Design; Fine Arts; Illustration as Visual Essay; Interaction Design; Photography, Video & Related Media. Precollege program. Division of Continuing Education.

Number of students in animation program: BFA Animation, 209; BFA Computer Art, Computer Animation & Visual Effects, 262; MFA Computer Art, 96

Cost of program: Undergraduate tuition 2008/2009, \$25,500 + various fees per department; MFA CA tuition 2008/2009 \$28,000 + \$2,400 fees

Head of animation: Reeves Lehmann, chair, BFA Film, Video & Animation; John McIntosh, chair, BFA Computer Art, Computer Animation & Visual Effects; Bruce Wands, chair, MFA Computer Art

Head of admissions: Adam Rogers, director

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline: February 1

The University of the Arts

Philadelphia, PA
Phone: 800-616-ARTS (2787)
E-mail: admissions@uarts.edu
Website: www.uarts.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: BFA in Animation; BFA in Film/Animation; BFA in Graphic Design; BFA in Multimedia

Head of admissions: Barbara Elliot

Application deadline: Rolling

University of Southern California

Los Angeles, CA
Phone: 213-740-3986
Fax: 213-740-5869
E-mail: dsigismondi@cinema.usc.edu

Website: <http://anim.usc.edu>

Degrees/certificates offered: BA & MFA

Number of students in animation program: BA: 60, MFA: 45

Cost of program: MFA: \$63,000 tuition for 3-year program

Head of animation: Kathy Smith (Chair of Division of Animation and Digital Arts)

Time of year offered: Fall admission only

Application deadline: BA: Dec. 10, MFA: Dec. 10

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Peck School of the Arts

Milwaukee, WI
Phone: 414-229-4763
Fax: 414-229-2473 fax
E-mail: seandram@uwm.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: BFA

Number of students in animation program: 30

Head of animation: Tim Decker, Rob Yeo

Head of admissions: Seandra Mitchell

Time of year offered: September - May

Application deadline: June of each year

Woodbury University

Burbank, CA
Phone: 818-767-0888
E-mail: info@woodbury.edu
Website: mcd.woodbury.edu

Degrees/certificates offered: Bachelor of Fine Arts

Number of students in animation program: 60

Cost of program: \$24,858 per year

Head of animation: Dori Littell-Herrick

Head of admissions: Ruth Lorenzano

Time of year offered: Fall and spring

Application deadline: Rolling admissions

Equipment: Woodbury Animation teaches traditional, digital and stop-motion animation. Students are encouraged to find their own creative voice through production of personal films.



JOHN C. HENCH ANIMATION & DIGITAL ARTS

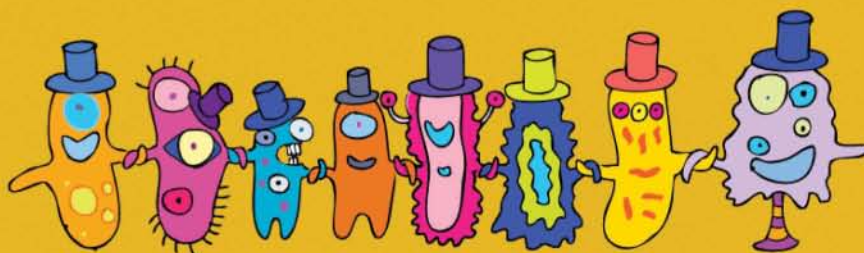
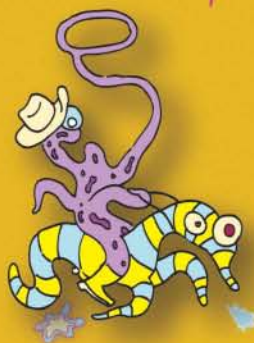
USC SCHOOL of Cinematic Arts

BA IN ANIMATION & DIGITAL ARTS
MFA IN ANIMATION & DIGITAL ARTS
MINOR IN ANIMATION & DIGITAL ARTS



Our innovative three-year program exploring the frontiers of animation art, is looking for students for admission for the Fall term 2009.

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<http://cinema.usc.edu/animation>
<http://anim.usc.edu>
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CONTACT INFORMATION
DAPHNE SIGISMONDI
Animation, USC School of Cinematic Arts
Los Angeles, CA 90089-2211

Telephone: (213) 740 3986
Email: dsigismondi@cinema.usc.edu

AUSTRALIA

**University of Melbourne
School of Film &
Television, Faculty of
Victorian College of the
Arts**

Melbourne, Victoria
Phone: 03 9685 9000
Fax: 03 9685 9001
E-mail: Domenica.Vavala@unimelb.edu.au
Website: www.digitalcompost.net/Animation@VCA

Degrees/certificates offered:
 2-year Masters, 1-year
 Graduate Diploma

**Number of students in
 animation program:** 12

Cost of program: See
 website for up to date info
www.vca.unimelb.edu.au/ftvapply/#cs_1958

Head of animation: Robert
 Stephenson & Paul Fletcher
rhst@unimelb.edu.au, fp@unimelb.edu.au

Head of admissions:
 Student Administration
 Services <https://sis.unimelb.edu.au/cgi-bin/admissions.pl>

Time of year offered: February
 to November; applications
 start in August

Application deadline:
 September TBC

Equipment: Traditional and
 digital animation studios;
 stop-motion studio, computer
 lab, 3 rostrum camera rooms,
 traditional drawing desks

CANADA

Collège Boréal

Sudbury, ON
Phone: 705-560-6673
Fax: 705-560-7641
E-mail: monchoix@borealc.on.ca
Website: www.borealc.on.ca
Degrees/certificates offered:
 3-year postsecondary diploma
Program: Animation 2D/3D
 (offered in French)

**Number of students in
 animation program:** 28
Cost of program: Approx.
 \$2,701 (1st year) + approx \$800
 (certification, etc.)

Head of animation: Isabelle
 Ratté

Head of admissions: Michelle
 Vincent

**Time of year
 offered:** September starts only;
 3-year program delivered
 over fall and winter semesters;
 September to April

Application deadline: Open

program, prior to start: August
 24

**Max the Mutt Animation
 School**

Toronto, ON
Phone: 416-703-6877 or 1-877-
 486-MUTT
Fax: 416-703-3930
E-mail: info@maxthemutt.com
Website: www.maxthemutt.com

Diplomas offered: 3-year
 Diploma in Classical and
 Computer Animation Basics,
 4th year Advanced Diploma
 in 3D Computer Animation &
 Production, 3-year Diploma in
 Illustration for Sequential Arts:
 Comic Books and Graphic
 Novels, 4-year Diploma in
 Concept Art for Animation &
 Video Games.

Cost of programs: TOTAL tuition
 for complete 3-year diploma
 programs (Illustration and
 Animation): \$27,275, (\$31,975
 U.S.A. and International
 students). TOTAL tuition for
 complete 4 year program
 in Concept Art: \$39,335,
 (\$45,995). TOTAL tuition for
 complete Advanced Diploma
 in 3D Computer Animation
 and Production: \$12,060
 (\$14,020). All tuition is in
 Canadian Dollars and is paid
 in six parts per year.

Head of admissions: Lisa
 Marners

Time of year offered:
 September to May

Application deadline: June

Vancouver Film School

Vancouver, BC
Phone: 604-685-5808 or 800-
 661-4101
Fax: 604-685-5830
E-mail: admissions@vfs.com
Website: vfs.com/animationvfx

Degrees/certificates offered:
 3D Animation & Visual Effects;
 Classical Animation; Digital
 Character Animation

**Number of students in
 animation program:** We have
 over 200 Animation students
 across 3 programs at a given
 time, in various stages of their
 year at VFS

Cost of program: See site for
 details

Head of Animation: Alastair
 Macleod

Head of Admissions: Benjamin
 Colling

Time of year offered: Start
 dates throughout the year
Application deadline: Rolling
 admissions

Equipment: Tuition includes

textbooks, equipment, art
 supplies, computers, a wide
 variety of software, and more

**Vancouver Institute of
 Media Arts**

Vancouver, BC
Phone: 604-682-2787 or 1-800-
 396-2787
Fax: 604-684-2789

E-mail: info@vanarts.com
Website: www.vanarts.com

Degrees/certificates offered:
 Diploma programs for 2D/3D
 Animation, Game Art &
 Design, Visual Effects, Digital
 Photography and Acting for
 Film & TV

**Number of students in
 animation program:** Average
 15 students per class (two
 intakes per year)

Cost of program: \$19,750-
 \$34,750 (see website for
 specific costs per program)

Head of animation: Charles
 Phillips (2D), Calvin Leduc (3D)

Head of admissions: Ken
 Priebe

Time of year offered: March &
 September

Application deadline: First-
 come, first-served; ideally 4-6
 months before desired start
 date

Equipment: Starting Sept 2009
 all students receive high-end
 laptop with software as part
 of tuition

INDIA

**Clusters School of Digital
 Arts**

Trivandrum, Kerala
Phone: +91 471 4066115, +91
 80 42131251 (corporate)
E-mail: tvm@csda.in, bgir@csda.in

Website: www.csda.in
Degrees/certificates offered:

12-week master courses
 in: Animation and Rigging;
 Modeling, Texturing & Lighting;
 Dynamics & VFX
Equipment: Pre-production
 lab, mini theatre, screening
 room, post-production facility,
 green-screen facility

**GRAPHITI School of
 Animation**

Mumbai, Maharashtra
Phone: 02224440107 / 022
 32448544 / 09833841580
Fax: 02224442347
E-mail: training@graphiti.net
Website: www.graphiti.net
Degrees/certificates offered:
 G-CAT Certificates

**Number of students in
 animation program:** 60 per
 batch
Cost of program: Rs. 150,000
Head of animation: Adesh
 Bhardwaj
Head of admissions: Asmita
 Deolekar
Time of year offered: June –
 July

Manipal Education

Bangalore, Karnataka
Phone: +91-80-40789100
Fax: +91-80-40789434
E-mail: animation@manipal.com
Website: www.manipal.edu/animation

Degrees/certificates offered:
 Bachelor of Science in
 Animation

**Number of students in
 animation program:** 90
Cost of program: \$19,500

Head of animation: Dr. Kushal
 Kumar

Head of admissions: Rajesh PK
Time of year offered: August
Application deadline: June
 30, 2009

Equipment: Fully equipped
 Apple lab with Wacom
 tablets; drawing studio with
 industry standard light tables;
 software: Maya, 3ds Max,
 Combustion, Toon Boom, Final
 Cut Pro, Adobe; photography
 facilities with equipment;
 workshop area for clay
 modeling and sculpting

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Fax: 972-9-7467484
E-mail: amir@3d-files.co.il
Website: www.3d-files.co.il
Degrees/certificates offered:
 Digital media tools
**Number of students in
 animation program:** 1-4
Cost of program: Varies
Equipment: PC graphic
 workstations

JAPAN

Nihon Kogakuin College

Tokyo, Japan
Phone: +81 3 3732 8411
Fax: +81 3 3732 8412
E-mail: cie-us@neec.ac.jp
Website: www.neec.ac.jp/cie/us
Degrees/certificates offered:
 Diploma, Advanced Diploma

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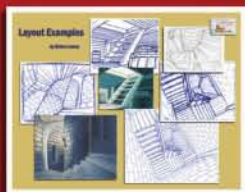
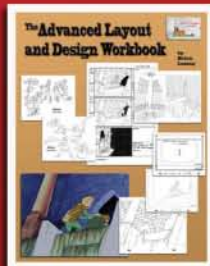
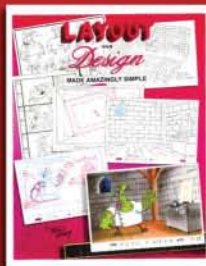
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Number of students in animation program: 600
Cost of program: Approximately 2,500,000 yen for 2 years
Time of year offered: April
Application deadline: February
Equipment: Studio CAL, Anime Factory, CG Design Factory, Manga Factory, VFX Digital Studio

MEXICO

TecnoToon Animation University

Mexico City, Mexico
Phone: +52 (55) 55744867
Email: tau@tecnooon.com
Website: www.tecnooon.com
Degrees/certificates offered: TAU training programs provide new graduates the opportunity to apply their academic training and knowledge in a real job. Graduates work on

TecnoToon's films and will have the opportunity to build their skills and learn from our creative and talented workforce during a six to twelve-month program. Participants will be evaluated during their term and may be considered for ongoing employment, dependent on overall performance and studio needs.
Number of students in animation program: 200 including young students and adults
Cost of programs: 2D: \$8,200

(per year); 3D: \$10,000. Non-Resident: \$13,000
Head of animation: Manuel Torres
Head of admissions: Silvia Aldana
Time of year offered: 2D and 3D, January
Application deadline: 1 month before the beginning of each program
Equipment: Well equipped for cartooning, animation workstations, lightboxes, life drawing, HD digital video and lighting techniques.

Universidad de Artes Digitales (Digital Arts University)

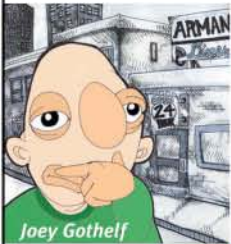
Guadalajara, Mexico
Phone: +52 (33) 36282420
Fax: +52 (33) 36282423
E-mail: informacion@uartesdigitales.com.mx
Website: www.uartesdigitales.edu.mx
Degrees/certificates offered: BA in Animation (3-year program), Digital Design (3 years), Audiovisual Production (3 years); Postgraduate/Speciality in AAA Videogame Design (6 month program, necessary STEM-D capabilities)
Number of students in animation program: 60
Cost of program: BA programs: \$18,000 USD (for all 3 years); Postgraduate/Speciality in Game Design: \$2,600 USD
Head of animation: Ariel Munoz Prado, Crew Leader
Head of admissions: Claudia Gomez Gutierrez
Time of year offered: BA in Animation or Digital Design: September; Postgraduate/Speciality in Videogame Design: July
Application deadline: 1 month before the beginning of each program
Equipment: Lightboxes, motion capture, robotics arms for 3D digitalizing, Wacom Cintiqs & Intuos, Mac Pro, iMac 24", sculpture, ProTools & Avid non lineal systems, professional digital cameras, Lunchboxes for stop-motion, HD video Sony stuff

WEFIS - Westbridge Film School


Mexico City, DF
Phone: 011-(5255) 5536-0406 , 1163-6120 and 1163-6121
Fax: 011-(5255) 5536-0406
E-mail: rp@westbridge.edu.mx
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A29

Degrees/certificates offered:
BA in Animation and Visual Effects (3 years); Masters Degree in Animated Filmmaking (1 year); Masters Degree in Visual Effects (1 year); Diploma in Videogame Design (1 year)
Number of students in animation program: 40
Cost of program: BA - \$34,500; Masters Degrees - \$11,500; Diploma in Videogame Design - \$11,500
Head of animation: Mauricio De la Orta
Head of admissions: Sonia Méndez
Time of year offered: Most programs begin every March and September
Application deadline:
For programs starting in March: February 15, 2009;
for programs starting in September: June 15, 2009
Equipment: 64bit multicore computer equipment, high-definition video cameras, newest versions of Maya, Adobe Production Suite and other related software, drawing tablets, etc.

NETHERLANDS

Netherlands Institute for Animation Film

Tilburg, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 13 5324070
Fax: +31 13 5800057
E-mail: niaf@niaf.nl
Website: www.niaf.nl
Degrees/certificates offered: Certificate
Number of students in animation program: 6
Cost of program: Please contact
Head of animation/admissions: Ton Crone
Time of year offered: Year-round
Application deadline: October 1, 2009
Equipment: Diverse

SOUTH AFRICA

SAE Institute Cape Town

Cape Town, South Africa
Phone: +27 (0)21 469 3600
Fax: +27 (0)21 465 5659
E-mail: info@cape-town@sae.edu

Website: www.saecapetown.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Digital Animation Diploma; BA (Hons) Digital Animation
Number of students in animation program: Max 25
Cost of program: 42,000 – 66,000 ZAR
Head of admissions: Lynne Paskin
Time of year offered: January and July
Application deadline: 4 weeks before course commencement
Equipment: Maya

UNITED KINGDOM

Escape Studios

London, England
Phone: 0207 348 1920
Fax: 0207 348 1921
E-mail: info@escapestudios.com
Website: www.escapestudios.com
Degrees/certificates offered: Escape Studios Certificate of

completion and Autodesk certificate of completion
Number of students in animation program: 12
Cost of program: £8,500, 12 week course
Head of animation: Lee Danskinn
Head of admissions: Jason Jenner
Time of Year Offered: Spring and autumn

Richard Williams Animation Masterclass

Bristol, England
Phone: +44 1834 871 114
Fax: +44 1834 871 596
E-mail: mo@masterclass.demon.co.uk
Website: www.theanimatorsurvivalkit.com

The listings section of this guide was compiled using direct information emailed to Animation Magazine by participating schools around the world. If you'd like to be included in the next edition of this guide, please email edit@animationmagazine.net. Also note that the information found in this guide is regularly updated on the magazine's website at www.animationmagazine.net/schools.html.

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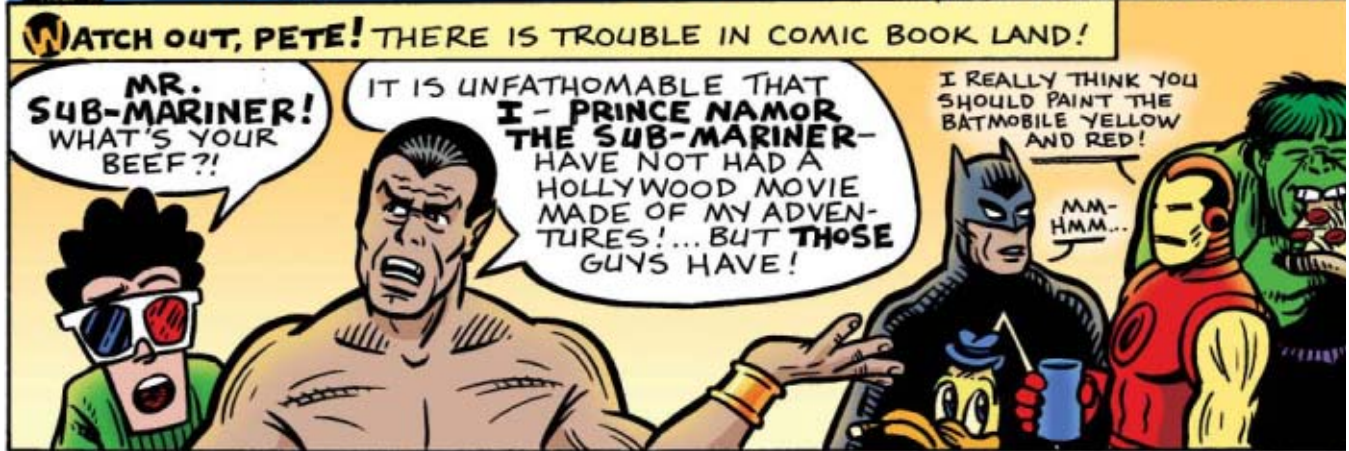
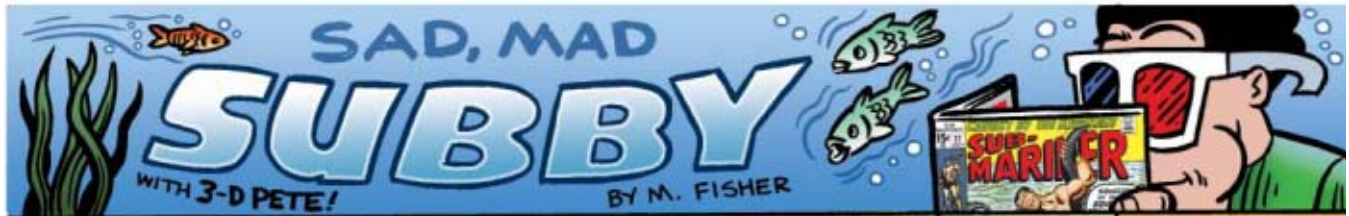
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Mutant Power: According to supervising producer Craig Kyle, the new series begins by revealing how Wolverine's team is formed, then really starts to take off as we follow their weekly adventures.

Logan's Run

The dude with the claws takes the lead in Nicktoons' *Wolverine and the X-Men*.

by Ryan Ball

Charles is no longer in charge. With Professor Xavier gone and the world facing certain doom, Wolverine must rise to the occasion and lead the X-Men into battle against evil forces in *Wolverine and the X-Men*. Co-produced by Marvel Ent., Toonz Ent. Singapore and First Serve International Ltd. in India, the new animated series debuts Jan. 23 at 8 p.m. on Nicktoons and promises to please fans of the beloved 1992 *X-Men* cartoon, while building a whole new fan base.

An explosive event shatters the lives of the mutants collectively known as the X-Men and takes away their mentor, Professor X. The beaten heroes, including Beast, Storm, Cyclops and Nightcrawler, walk away from calamity, but are given a rare glimpse into the future, seeing a world in utter ruin and ruled by giant destructive robots. They discover the world has spiraled out of control because the X-Men have given up. Now Wolverine must take the lead on the ultimate mission—to prevent the world's destruction while fending off enemies Magneto and The Brotherhood.

Supervising producer Craig Kyle says

that there was a lot of backlash from hardcore fans when they heard the title of the series because everyone has their own ideas about who should lead the X team. "We expect that and we love that, because when people debate that heatedly over made-up characters, it shows you how important these guys are to everybody," he remarks. "But we were quick to point out that we agree. [Wol-

"[Wolverine] should not lead this team. He's the guy who stabs stuff ... You get this great conflict and the whole world's turned upside down because the guy who we all agree should not be in charge is forced to be."

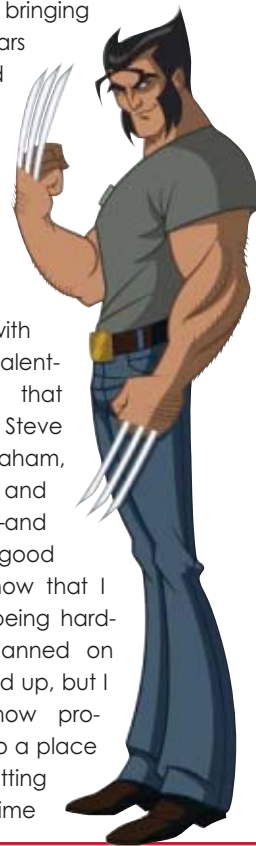
—*Wolverine and the X-Men* supervising producer Craig Kyle

verine] should not lead this team. He's the guy who stabs stuff. He just cuts open doors and slashes stuff so the good guys can do what they need to do to save the world and make it a better place. When you take that 'Han Solo' character, put him out front and say, 'Now lead this team,' it's a problem. You get this great conflict and the whole world's turned upside down because the guy who we all agree should not be in charge is forced

to be. By taking out Xavier and Jean Gray, and putting Wolverine in charge, up is down and black is white—everything is insane and that's what makes for an exciting series because no one can guess what's going to happen tomorrow."

X-Men was the very first comic book Kyle ever bought, and he has been a huge fan of the property ever since. He was in college when the '92 series debuted, and achingly wished he could be a part of bringing it to the screen. Years later, he found himself fortunate enough to work in the story department on the 2000 animated series *X-Men: Evolution*.

"I got to work with some extremely talented people on that show—Frank Paur, Steve Gordon, Gary Graham, Boyd Kirkland and Greg Johnson—and we made a very good show—not the show that I think any of us, being hardcore fanboys, planned on when we all signed up, but I think as the show progressed, we got to a place where it was getting close. But this time



around, with *Wolverine and the X-Men*, people left us alone. Great guys like Kevin Feige [president of production at Marvel Ent.] trusted us to bring a show that was really going to do justice to the X-Men and bring them to life in a way that the '90s show did. This is as close as I've ever come to working on a moving comic."

Hyun Young Enterprise Co. Ltd and Sung Production serve as the overseas animation studios for the series. Kyle says



the main directive for the animation style was to evoke the feeling of the comics, but sidestep the limitations that imposes. "Looking at the '90s series, they did an amazing job of really capturing the costumes that were in those pages. But I think where they suffered was when you have such line-heavy designs, it's very hard to get fluid movement. We wanted a way to open the shapes up so that the animation would be fluid and pretty on screen. You don't want the show's look to suffer because you're trying to be such a slave to the comics."

The team at Marvel Animation was inspired by *Astonishing X-Men*, a recent comic series written by Joss Whedon. In those books, illustrator John Cassaday saw fit to update the heroes' costumes to appeal to a new audience. "We took that approach," notes Kyle. "We really tried to find a way to speak to the classic, while updating the costumes enough so they look like what the heroes would be dressed in today, because this is a new chapter in an ongoing saga."

According to Kyle, fans will recognize many elements in the show that were inspired by stories and artwork from the various X-Men comic-book series. "I don't want to get into the overall, but there's definitely a big story we're telling that was inspired by what was found in the

books," he says, adding, "In episode four with Storm, her origin story is told very much like it was in the books. We have another episode where we get to see Nightcrawler as a swashbuckling, sword-wielding hero who saves a group of mutants because there was a great time in comics where he really was the cavalier hero, and we wanted to bring that to life in the series."

Clash of the Titans

In staging an epic fight between Wolverine and Hulk, the show's producers also looked to *The Incredible Hulk* #181, the issue that actually introduced Wolverine. The episode is a continuation of the battle that rages in *Hulk vs. Wolverine*, a new direct-to-video animated feature that hit retail in January, kicking off a series of *Hulk vs.* movies—*Hulk vs. Thor* is bundled with *vs. Wolverine*. In addition to Hulk, *Wolverine and the X-Men* will feature guest appearances by other characters from the Marvel Universe. We got the scoop that Nick Fury will also be stopping by at some point.

Some eyebrows went up when it was announced that *Wolverine* and fellow Marvel superhero cartoon *Iron Man* would be going to Nicktoons, which isn't exactly known for hard-hitting action with the type of complexity the Marvel

properties bring with them. However, Keith Dawkins, senior VP of Nickelodeon programming partnerships, says they are exactly what the network needs to better serve its core audience of 11-year-old boys, while also roping in older viewers.

"We're bringing good storytelling, good visuals, good characters, good narratives and good properties to the air that I think our audience is really going to enjoy," Dawkins comments. "*Wolverine and the X-Men* is metaphor for a lot of the things that are going on in our lives—past, present and future. I feel like I can have a lot of great, adult dinner conversations around [the show], and at the same time know that it's a property I'm bringing in for my kid audience. That excites me."

The first three episodes of *Wolverine and the X-Men* are dedicated to "getting the band back together," as Kyle puts it, and merely serve to set up great things to come. "If you read comics, that's the experience you're going to find—it starts off good, continues to get better and man, once you're in, you're hooked," Kyle says. "I'm so proud of so many of the episodes and the way we end those first 13, but I tell you, once you get into that back 13, that show is a freight train." ■

Wolverine and the X-Men premieres at 8 p.m. on Jan. 23 on Nicktoons.

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In the Paws of Evil

Studio B's *Kid vs. Kat* delivers a refreshing take on the classic "cats are nefarious creatures from outer space" premise! **by Ramin Zahed**



The team at Vancouver-based Studio B Productions, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, knows a thing or two about quirky and off-the-wall subjects for animation. They've animated shows about child actors (*Ricky Sprocket: Show Biz Kid*), the high school life of classic Greek heroes (*Class of the Titans*) and the misadventures of a baseball team made up entirely of birds (*D'Myna Leagues*). Last year, they worked on Cartoon Network's new version of *George of the Jungle* and helped bring to life the beloved children's book *Martha Speaks* for WGBH/Boston and PBS.

Their latest venture is a throwback to the classic toons of yesteryear. Stylistically inspired by the old UPA shorts, the Jetix Europe/YTV co-production charts the battles between a young boy and a feline creature named Kat, who may very well be a hostile alien from space! The show's creator, Rob Boutilier, is a Studio B veteran who initially pitched the idea as a short called *Look What My Sister Dragged In*. He says he used his own experiences as the owner of an odd hairless cat as inspiration for the project.

"About 10 years ago, I became a cat owner for the first time in my life," he recalls. "I had a dog and parakeets when I was growing up, but having a pet cat totally changed everything. It really took over my life. I was constantly amazed at how such a small animal could take up so much room. I also noticed that people had very strong reactions to this hairless cat. They either thought it was extremely cool, or they figured it was really ugly and kind of looked like this alien creature."

Boutilier, who has worked on *Ricky Sprocket* and *George of the Jungle*, says he soon began to wonder what would happen if the cat went insane and attacked him. "I wanted to do something that was fairly simple—kind of like the old Coyote and Roadrunner or Tom and Jerry cartoons," he notes. "We don't see many shows with a limited number of characters. As a side note, I was getting a bit frustrated working on shows which had

a cast of characters that was getting bigger and bigger each year. Maybe it was just my own laziness of having to work on six main characters in one





Blair Peters



Rob Boutilier

shot!"

Although the series is Flash-animated, viewers may see the influence of old UPA masters in its clean, graphic style. "Gerald McBoing Boing is my favorite short of all time," says Boutilier. "I do tend to like the graphic flat look in animation as well as the cut-out, *Peanuts* look."

Blair Peters, exec producer and co-founder of Studio B

Productions, says he and his partner Chris Bartleman were excited about the project back when it was submitted as one of the in-house pilots for their B-Hive development incubator. "We showed the pilot to MIPCOM Junior buyers in the fall of 2006, and it was pretty exciting because the show was one of the most-screened projects at the market," says Peters. "We hadn't even had our first cup of coffee that Monday morning, and people were coming to our booth for meetings about the show." Soon after, YTV and Jetix Europe came on board as production partners for the show.

What they knew from the beginning was that "the cat was not quite right," jokes Boutilier. "We knew that our lead

boy's sister dropped this cat into his life, and after that, we had big brainstorming sessions and came up with great story ideas for these characters. Seriously, we started the show at a fortunate time, so we were able to grab some of the best people at the studio to join our team."

One of the key goals for the show's creative team was to keep the designs simple and to avoid overloading each scene. "We have a flatter look. We wanted the show to look different from *George of the Jungle* and *Ricky Sprocket*. You'll notice that the characters are all properly separated. We've been able to refine the Flash animation pipeline through the years," says Peters. "Rob actually worked on *Yakkity Yak*, which was one of our first Flash shows [the series ran on Nicktoons in 2003]. These days, broadcasters aren't willing to pay a lot for their shows, so we're lucky because we've been able to keep our budgets pretty consistent."

Although *Kid vs. Kat* wasn't the first directing gig for Boutilier, he says he was blessed with a team that was always

able to back him up. "Trust is a big thing when it comes to working on an animated show like this. I learned that there was no way I could have my eyes on everything. I have huge confidence in my co-directors and Studio B was equally happy with the team and encouraging."

As Studio B, which was purchased by DHX Media (parent company of Decode Entertainment and Halifax Film) in December 2007, embarks on its 21st year in the business, Peters says his team will continue to follow their instincts about creating strong quality toons. "We are very excited about some of the other projects we have in our incubator, B-Hive. Our M.O. hasn't changed in years—we still look at good ideas, no matter where they come from. We're just happy to start the year with *Martha Speaks*, which is a big hit on PBS, and *Kid Vs. Kat*, which has already begun its run on ABC Australia."

Boutilier is thrilled about the cross-generational appeal of the cat. "For me the biggest compliment so far is that when we sneaked the show on YTV, I got e-

"These days, we don't see many shows with a limited number of characters. As a side note, I was getting a bit frustrated working on shows which had a cast of characters that was getting bigger and bigger each year."

—*Kid vs. Kat* creator Rob Boutilier



mails from friends who have children, and the good news was that parents were reacting as positively to the show as their kids. One of them said, 'Hey, this sounds and looks like something I watched when I was a kid.'"

Another similar reaction happened recently when a class of school kids toured the studio with their teacher. "There were about 20 kids visiting us, and we had these eight- and nine-year-old boys telling us that they liked the show because 'there's always something going on in every scene.' Kids pick that up!" That's if you forget the universal appeal of hairless cats from outer space! ■

***Kid vs. Kat* premieres on Canada's YTV on January 10 and will air on Jetix Europe later in 2009.**

What's New at NATPE!

The 46th edition of the NATPE market brings over 8,000 media execs from 76 countries to the Mandalay Resort in Las Vegas, Jan. 26-29. Among this year's TV luminaries are Chuck Lorre, Tyler Perry, Ben Silverman and Anne Sweeney who will receive the Brandon Tartikoff Legacy Awards and take part in one-on-one interviews Tuesday morning. Here are some of the new animated shows that will be available to buyers, distributors and co-pro partners at the event:



Exotic Escapes:

Big Bocca Productions is shopping *Huntik, Secrets and Seekers*, an exciting 26x23 boys adventure show about two young globe-trotters who explore exotic locations to track down spirit-warriors to help them against the evil powers of the Professor! The toon is co-produced by Rainbow S.p.A., m4e AG and RAI 2.

Double Trouble:

A&S Animation is bringing *Luke & Reece Save the World* to the market. Produced by Mark Simon, this 26x30 Flash-animated series follows the crazy adventures of a pair of delusional toddler twins who save the world from dangers only they can see!



Legendary Seafarer: CHINAnimax's *Zheng He's Voyages to the West Seas* is a beautifully animated 52x22 series about the exploration of a famous navigator during the Ming Dynasty.



Sky's the Limit: Cookie Jar and Sunwoo will be showing off their latest action adventure series, *Metajets*. The 40x30 show focuses on a group of young flying aces who compete on the Aeronautical Racing Circuit while secretly waging a risky battle for air supremacy!

Beastly Behavior:

NATPE buyers will get a chance to check out Cuppa Coffee's popular *Life's a Zoo* series. The 13x33, stop-motion spoof of reality shows has been performing well on TELETOON's latenight adult block and online.



A Close Group of Friends:

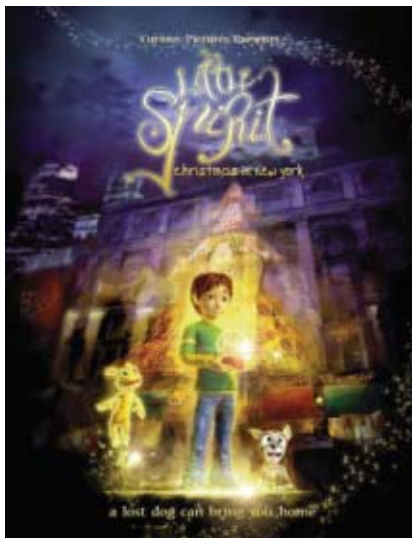
Cyber Group Animation, Sardine Productions and Planet Nemo offer a whimsical animated preschool series



called **Manon**. The 52x7 show centers on the "little queen of animals" and her pals, Bingo the dog, Melba the cat and Baz the donkey.

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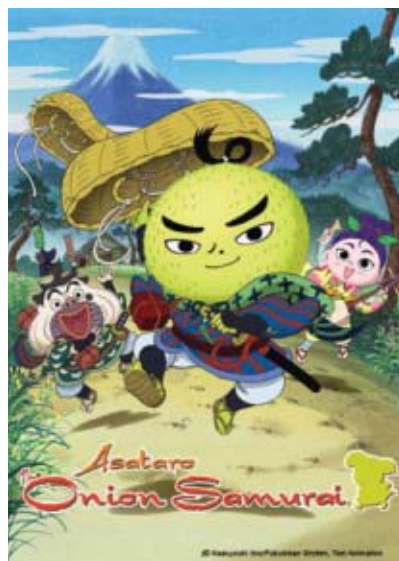
One More Holiday Tale: IM Global is shopping Curious Pictures' CG-animated *Little Spirit: Christmas in New York*, the tale of a young boy named Leo, his magical imp buddy and their adventures in New York City. The hour-long special is narrated by Danny DeVito and features music by Duncan Sheik.



A Boy and His Pooch:

Argentina's busy animation house Illusion Studios offers **Mutt** (26x22 or 52x11), a 2D toon about the friendship between a shy teenager and a street-smart dog who can truly understand each other.

Peel With Care: What would a TV market be without another new cool toon from Toei Animation? The latest half-hour series from Toei is called *Asataro, the Onion Samurai*. Created by Kazuyoshi Iino, it charts the journeys of an onion boy who sets out to protect his hometown from the evil Hoopoe Gombah. His secret weapon? Onion juice!



More Tiny Heroes:

If you're looking for a new take on the old heroic team genre, check out Nelvana's new **Skull Kids** series, a 26x22 CG toon co-produced with Korea's Enemes studio. Jark, Rakimo, Bluekan, Mendible and Minum are billed as part heroes, part hoaxers—teammates, squabbling siblings and valiant saviors!

FEB•09

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Action Hero Father Knows Best

Animation Development Company and Toonzone Studios get ready to send Action Dad on his first assignment.

by Ramin Zahed

It's been two years since Woodland Hills-based Animation Development Company and Toonzone Studios teamed up to work on their first joint venture, a great-looking toon called *Action Dad*.

Created by Andy Dickman, who did storyboards and character designs for shows such as *Loonatics Unleashed* and *Danger Rangers*, the show centers on an average, single father named Chuck Ramsey who has to face the daily trials of life with his very capable 14-year-old daughter and his brainy 12-year-old son.

"We noticed that there are lots of shows out there that put the poor dads down," says Konnie Kwak, the series' well-regarded exec producer and president of Toonzone Studios, an animation house with offices in both L.A. and Vancouver.

"We took a lot of care to portray the dad as an intelligent, caring figure. It's just that sometimes he just doesn't get it, like many parents in today's world. Of course, he has to deal with the regular trials of family life, but on top of that, he has to fight evil and save the world!"

What sets the show apart from many of the toons on the drawing boards out there today is the fact that it's fully funded, thanks to the efforts of Animation Development Company.

With co-producer Hawaii Film Partners (*Ape Escape*, *Flight 29 Down*) and distribution in the hands of Showcase Entertainment, the episodes are slated to be ready by late 2009.

"Personally, I consider it remarkable that we received such a fantastic response at last year's MIPCOM Junior market," says Ira Warren, ADC's seasoned finance consultant. "There were over 1,100 shows submitted for viewing and we came in number 13 of the most viewed shows by the many network executives. That's fantastic considering that we were competing with such well-known, established major studio brands as Disney and Warner Bros.—we came in ahead of *Batman* and *Garfield*!"

Kwak, who has many years of experience producing TV animation, says the show would be perfect for primetime audiences. "Originally, we were planning for a younger audience, but after feedback from the networks that we are in touch with currently, there seems to be more of a demand for older family fare.

"Since we are currently in production, we can work on the real dynamics between the characters, and reflect the changes that the networks are looking for in the next year. Therefore, right now we are targeting the eight- to

12-year-olds and their parents."

"We have funding for 26 episodes, but we're looking to find a top show runner and a new network partner in the near future and we hope to debut the series in the fall of 2009," she adds. "The budget for the show is \$10 million, but the show is going to look like we produced it for 10 times that amount."

Kwak and Warren are also working on another appealing toon that is generating early buzz internationally: *Tiny Warriors* is an action adventure series focusing on miniature-sized martial arts characters. Kwak says the fact that she's a few months away

from earning her black belt and is married to a martial artist certainly helps with the creative part of the toon.

Warren points out that because of the show's strong merchandising hook, many companies in both western and Asian territories have already expressed interest. "We have already been contacted by Chinese co-production partners, and that is a huge plus in the global marketplace right now because the Chinese government is making a big push for animation."

Like many working in the field today, Kwak and Warren believe that although the current economic climate has impacted the business, there will always be a place for strong, quality animated shows.

"The market has certainly changed since a year ago, because of the credit crunch, and many investment bankers don't know where the money is going to be next year," says Kwak. "But we consider that to be a plus for us, be-

cause we've secured international funding. Investors feel nervous about putting their money in the stock market and in banks, so investing in an animation series with solid creative teams becomes a good option."

Warren agrees. "I consider the children's market to be recession-proof,"

he says. "From an investor's standpoint, children will always watch cartoons, even when mom and dad are wringing their hands as they look at their stock portfolio reports."

What seems to be keeping Kwak and Warren optimistic about the future is the timeless appeal of quality TV shows for viewers all over the world. "The shows that we all love have a long shelf life," concludes Kwak.

"It's not about what's hip and faddish in a year or two. You look at the classics like *Tom and Jerry* or *Winnie the Pooh*: They've been around for 40, 50 years. That's what we're aiming for with *Action Dad*. We hope people will stay in love with this family for a long, long time." ■

For more information, visit www.animationdc.com.



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Lincoln Butterfield Does the Monster Mash

The innovative studio's new toon takes a real-life approach to the mysterious world of monsters.

Monsters of the world, rejoice. There's a new animated show on the horizon that puts you front and center, and lets audiences know that you have feelings, too! The show in question is called *R.I.P. M.D.* and is brought to the NATPE TV market by the very cool, indie Burbank, Calif.-based studio known as Lincoln Butterfield.

The series is created by Mitch Schauer, the talented animation biz veteran who is best known for his popular Nickelodeon show *The Angry Beavers* (1997-2001). "I think this is the first show that has this full love for monsters. We have this young boy who finds out that monsters are real and have real problems, so we get to deal with all aspects of their world through a really likable protagonist. It's a fun, 2D show that is character-driven and really works on different levels."

R.I.P. M.D. is a perfect fit with the rest of the shows on Lincoln Butterfield's eclectic slate. "When Mitch initially shared the *R.I.P. M.D.* concept with us, we knew that we needed to develop this wonderfully unique series," says Robert Hughes, who co-founded Lincoln Butterfield with business entrepreneur Joseph Walker. Like Schauer, Hughes has many years of experience in the TV toon arena. His many credits include *Duckman*, *The Critic*, *The Angry Beavers*, *As Told by Ginger*, *Catscratch* and *Rocko's Modern Life*. Most recently, he's been directing Disney Channel's hit show, *Phineas and Ferb*. Veteran producer Michael Lessa (*Heavy Metal*) and Schauer round up the studio's impressive core team.

Among the studio's other kids' shows are *Tan* (26x30), a well-designed action comedy about a closely knit team of egg warriors who have just graduated from the Lo Fat Martial Arts Academy and Cooking School. Created by Schauer and Hughes, the series has been picked up for distribution and licensing by L.A.'s Porchlight Entertainment. The studio also made a splash at the last MIPCOM market with *N.I.T.: The Neigh-*

borhood Investigation Team, a toon about a group of kids who have a knack for detective work in their neighborhood.

Lincoln Butterfield has a couple of more adult-oriented toons on its development slate, too. *When in Rome* centers on the adventures of two regular guys in the brutal world of the Roman Empire—think of it as *I, Claudius* filtered through the eyes of a wild *Mad* magazine car-

Creature Care: Lincoln Butterfield's new series *R.I.P. M.D.* gets up-close and personal with monsters.



toonist. Not surprisingly, the series is also available as a comic book and has generated a lot of buzz in Italy. Robert Hughes and Joseph Walker spoof all our favorite space travel and office shows in *Venture Probe*, which takes a look at what happens when you put an incompetent, bureaucracy-driven crew in a galaxy-hopping space ship.

"Although the shows will look different and target different audiences, they will all have the Lincoln Butterfield stamp in their core," says Hughes. "We don't talk down to the audience, preach to them or assume they don't understand," added Hughes. "We begin with fresh concepts that are—above all—fun, and develop them with the idea of transcending the traditional demographic and geographic barriers."

"As a small creative company with deep animation production experience, we're able to bring the global marketplace fully developed animation projects for various content distribution platforms," notes Walker. "Our plan is to keep our overhead small and our resources tight. Everyone here is going to wear different hats. Part of our original goal was to utilize the people we've known in the animation community—there are so many good people out there who aren't get-



Joseph Walker



Mitch Schauer



Robert Hughes

ting the attention they deserve. Collectively, we have over 90 years of experience between all of us here! You can also say that our three most relevant words are ability, agility and mobility!"

Although the financial climate makes it difficult for many to remain optimistic about the business, the Lincoln Butterfield team is ready to take advantage of the opportunities that will come their way in 2009. "All the various networks and new content providers have a lot of space to fill, and they're looking for something of quality," says Hughes. "Whether the economy is thriving or not, people are going to watch TV, and good programming is always good programming!"

Of course, curious minds want to know how they came up with the very impressive, solid-sounding name for the studio. "To be honest, we were looking for a lofty name, something that said we are dead serious about funny animation," says Walker. You know all the great animation companies have these two-part names like Hanna-Barbera or Ruby-Spears, so we picked two names that sounded like a prestigious law firm! It's actually kind of tongue in cheek!" ■

Make sure to visit Lincoln Butterfield at the NATPE market (Booth No. 1425). You can learn more about the studio at www.lincolnbutterfield.com.



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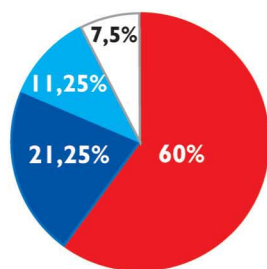
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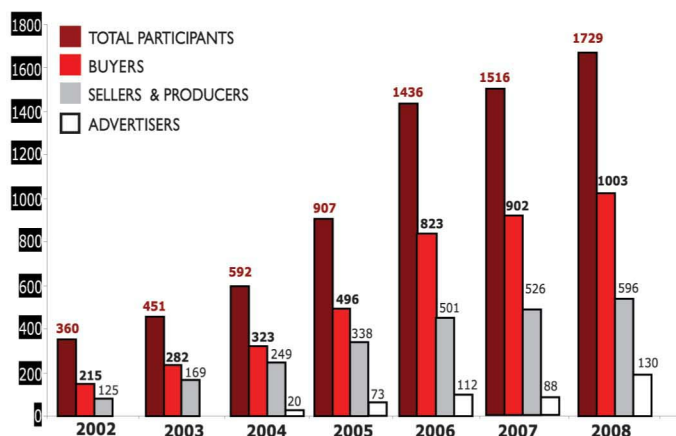
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The Padded Cel

by Robby London



The Jury's Still Out on Toon Creators vs. Litigators

If you flew into LAX on Christmas Eve, you may have spotted Santa Claus stuck headfirst in one of those iconic, pollution-spewing smokestacks known locally as "the pride of El Segundo." Apparently, Santa was blown off course by a freak aviation anomaly—a United flight arriving on time. He was coming from nearby Mattel where he had given Barbie her best Christmas present ever: victory in the copyright infringement lawsuit against MGA's Bratz. That's right: GIRL FIGHT!!! As Santa put it diplomatically, "Barbie had been nice and Bratz, very very naughty." (It's hard to tell when Santa is blushing.) Barbie, being the assertive modern role model that she is, was more direct: "Those trampy sluts got what they deserve." (We're guessing the Barbie development team is hard at work on next season's line extension, "Litigating B**** Barbie.")

In any event, it was a significant verdict and Bratz has been ordered off the shelves this month. Those poor girls could well end up being trafficked in the streets of Asia—not a pretty picture.

Litigation looms large in the world of animation, and the Bratz verdict inspired us to share some insights and experiences regarding legal doings. Of course, the above represents an illustration of the legal principle of "Fair Use Doctrine," which allows sniping weasels like me to taunt powerful corporations and public figures with impunity—so long as it's in the context of comedy. You're right. I'm in serious trouble.

Legal headaches have become ubiquitous in our business. To cite just one small example, have you tried lately to clear a new character name that has not already been trademarked for merchandise? It's easier to find an available Hotmail name. You can spend

half your development budget on trademark searches. About the only way to come up with a name that someone doesn't already control is to have a computer generate random letters. The series I'm currently developing has the killer title, *Me and You and A Dog Named Zqpiejdpo68*. (Attention program buyers: Rights still available in select territories.)

Where's my money?!



Illustration by Mercedes Milligan

Copyright infringement can be an insidious production obstacle and ever-present danger. Have you noticed that in budget-challenged television cartoons, characters perversely sing the public domain song "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow" for birthday celebrations—even for females?! One of two conclusions can be drawn: Either the character is transgender, or the producer wished to avoid exposure to royalties and damages

associated with "Happy Birthday To You," which is actually copyrighted. I don't know if "Here Comes The Bride" is copyrighted or not, but just to be safe, next time I get married it's going to be to the public domain strains of "What Do You Do With A Drunken Sailor?"

Of course, copyright infringement is hardly the only source of litigation in our business. Breach of contract is another favorite. In one such "fact-is-stranger-than-fiction" lawsuit, I was formally deposed and forced to explain, under oath, how a series—that was contractually required to be appropriate for children—would feature the brief appearance of genitalia on an animated sea serpent. Oh, those wacky artists.

"Mr. London, please tell us, for the record, why that cartoon character was given testicles."

"Hmm. Probably so it could reproduce."

That case was settled. The serpent was castrated. The series was cancelled. And I was held in contempt of comedy and sentenced to community service—which you are currently reading. We would end this epic tale of justice and retribution by singing the famous *Dagnet* theme: "dumm-da-DUMM-dumm," but we don't have the rights. And I don't think either you or I wish to see my community service extended.

Finally, to all you spineless, cowardly "CYA" executives whose shameless terror of lawsuits dictates your every action and drowns our world in weasel legal disclaimers—you know what I say to you? This column is intended solely for purposes of fantasy entertainment and no legal advice is intended, implied or warranted. All models are over 18 and records are on file pursuant to U.S.C. §2257. ■

Robby London is an animation industry veteran who has a thing for doe-eyed dolls with big fat lips who resemble Angelina Jolie. His columns amuse us to no end, but don't reflect the opinions of the Animation Magazine staff—that is, if we had any.

“IF MISERY LOVES COMPANY” WE MADE SURE YOU WON'T BE LONELY

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Animation Magazine's Oscar Watch

[part 3 of 4]

Prepare for the Ruthless Road to the VFX Bake-Off!

by Barbara Robertson

On December 12, the executive committee for the visual effects branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences released a list of 15 candidates for the visual effects Oscar. This month, they'll whittle the list down to the seven that will compete for votes at the annual bake-off on January 15 that determines the top three nominees.

Australia

A herd of digital cows stampede in digitally dusty Australia on their way to digital Darwin in Baz Luhrmann's lavish epic. The stampeding cattle skirting danger near the edge of a cliff amplify the film's dramatic high point, but can invisible visual effects in a *Gone with the Wind*-type epic rise to bake-off contention? It's happened before.



Studio: Twentieth-Century Fox
VFX: Animal Logic, Photon VFX, Complete Post, Digital Pictures Iloura, Evil Eye Pictures, Framestore, Frame, Set & Match, Fuel VFX, Hydraulx, The Lab Sydney, Lola Visual Effects, Rising Sun Pictures

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian

VFX teams led by supes Wright and Rogers created a grittier, wilder generation of Narnians for this dark sequel: a swashbuckling mouse, bear, badger and, of course, Aslan the lion. Magical trees and an amazing water creature rescued digital armies of mythical creatures and animals from battalions of digital humans. This second C. S. Lewis outing could easily ride into the bake-off seven.



Studio: Walt Disney Pictures
VFX: Escape Studios, Framestore, Fugitive, Moving Picture Company, Rainmaker, Rising Sun Pictures, Scanline VFX, Weta Digital, Weta Workshop

Cloverfield

The effects never break the terrifying illusion that a monster is ripping apart Manhattan. At first, we see the destruction, but only tantalizing glimpses of the monster through a hand-held camera of a guy documenting a going-away party. Tippet Studio's monster and its offspring appear and the party ends, but not, we're guessing, for the visual effects crew who could sneak into the bake-off—if the shaky hand-held camera routine doesn't ruin their chances.



Studio: Paramount
VFX: Creative Character Engineering (animatronics), Hammerhead Productions, Double Negative, Tippet Studio (creature animation), Pacific Title (optical)

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

Digital Domain convinces audiences that Benjamin Button (Brad Pitt) was born old. Creating a believable digital version of that famous face for 52 minutes should be enough to send this film on to a nomination (and perhaps an Oscar), but other effects serve the film's magical realism, too: reverse aging by Lola, period reconstructions, matte paintings. There's a lot of award season momentum behind this magical movie.



Studio: Paramount
VFX: Asylum VFX, Digital Domain, Evil Eye Pictures, Hydraulx, Lola Visual Effects, Matte World Digital, Ollin Studio

The Dark Knight

It's not only about Heath Ledger. Batman stars in this film, too, and sometimes he's digital. The complex mix of live-action cinematography, green-screen footage, miniatures, physical effects and CG are so real it's nearly impossible to tell which is which—which is what effects are all about. Can the 700 visual effects shots

send this film to the bake-off? Could do. Should do.



Studio: Warner Bros.
VFX: BUF, Cinesite, Double Negative, Escape Studios, Framestore, New Deal Studios

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Jeff Okun supervised the creation of the iconic Gort and swarms of teeny alien beings with big teeth that gobble up Giants stadium. Cinesite built several environments, but Weta Digital handled the aliens and their mysterious spheres, which rise above the level of the story in this film. The mediocre reviews shouldn't hurt the chances for visual effects recognition, but it often does.



Studio: 20th Century Fox
VFX: At The Post, Cinesite, Digital Dimension, Flash Film Works, Hydraulx, Weta Digital

Hancock

Will Smith rockets into the air, soars through digital cities and skids to rough landings in this comic action-adventure. John Dykstra, who won a visual effects Oscar for *Spider-Man 2*, designed the effects for the box office blockbuster. Are the effects too much "been there, done that" to send this one to the bake-off? It hasn't mattered before.



Studio: Columbia
VFX: Furious FX, Luma Pictures, New Deal Studios, Sony Pictures Imageworks, X1FX

Hellboy II: The Golden Army

A crew of 250 at Double Negative under Mike Wasel's supervision delivered extremely nasty tooth fairies, mean golden robots, a headless elephant on giraffe legs, a two-headed, three-armed kangaroo rat and a building sized tree creature. They also lit the fiery Liz, blinked rubber-mask eyes and sent an ectoplasm out into the world. Critics love Guillermo del Toro and the highly imaginative effects he brings to his movies. The Committee might, too.



Studio: Universal

VFX Studios: Baseblack, Cinesite, Cube Effects, Double Negative, Filmefex Studio, Ghost, Hatch Production, LipSynch Post, Spectral Motion

The Incredible Hulk

Kurt Williams was overall supe; Rhythm & Hues, Soho and Hydraulx led the charge with R&H muscling the green behemoth's volume-preserving close-ups, animating his painful transformations and fights with the grotesque Abomination. Soho sent the battle to the rooftops. Hydraulx transformed Abomination and built a city. Will it make the bake-off short list? No reason it shouldn't, but this superhero is probably to be overshadowed by his other Marvel peer, Iron Man.



Studio: Universal

VFX: Gentle Giant Studios, Hydraulx, Image Engine Design, Laird McMurray, Lidar Services, Lola Visual Effects, Mova, Rhythm & Hues, Soho VFX, X1FX

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

As audacious and good humored as its predecessors, this film finds Indy scrambling for a crystal skull and whipping a few Russians. Stand-out scenes include a swash-buckling jungle chase, a giant ant attack, a waterfall



slide, a nuclear explosion and the swirling crystal skull ending. The quality of the craftsmanship could spin this film, which grossed \$783 million worldwide, right into the bake-off.

Studio: Paramount

VFX: Industrial Light & Magic, Kerner Optical (models, miniatures), Rodeo FX, Stan Winston Studio

Iron Man

ILM fashioned some amazing state-of-the-art digital suits for Iron Man Robert Downey, Jr., a "suit up" machine and Iron Monger and convinced audiences that the full-metal jackets could fly—even dogfight with a jet. The Embassy built Tony Stark's first digital suit; The Orphanage, his heads-up display. ILM caused the effects (and Iron Man) to take off. We have a feeling this enormously likable hit of the summer is going to fly into the bake-off without a hitch.



Studio: Paramount

VFX: CafeFX, The Embassy, Industrial Light & Magic, Lola Visual Effects, New Deal Studios, The Orphanage, Stan Winston Studio

Journey to the Center of the Earth

Chris Townsend led the effort on this first major feature to be shot in stereo 3-D, which doubled the post-production work and created interesting adventures for the tracking and compositing teams. *Journey* is the first multiplexer released in stereo 3-D to gross more than \$100 million. Will the committee put on the funny glasses and send this one deeper into Oscar territory? Maybe. The fact that the movie is doing very well on DVD and is playing on planes around the world should also help its chances!



Studio: Warner Bros.

VFX: Frantic Films, Hybride Technologies, Meteor Studios, Mokko Studio, Rodeo FX

The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor

For this three-peat, Digital Domain and Rhythm & Hues took the lead by building and breaking terracotta soldiers. DD sent armies of pottery soldiers battling against armies of mummies. R&H created a fuzzy Yeti,

a three-headed Foo dog and a pool of diamonds. Can the massive effects in this tongue-in-cheek epic make it to the bake-off, or has the franchise run its course? *Mummy's* the word.



Studio: Universal Pictures

VFX: CafeFX, Digital Domain, New Deal Studios, Rainmaker, Rhythm & Hues

Quantum of Solace

Bond, James Bond, is a dish best served with cool and invisible visual effects. Kevin Tod Haug designed the effects that the post houses executed in 12 weeks, including stirring aerial action that mixed Double Negative's CG planes with models, and a fiery fight sparked by MPC. It has all the requisite elements, but the competition is really ruthless this year!



Studio: Columbia

VFX: Double Negative, Framestore, MK12, Machine, Moving Picture Company

The Spiderwick Chronicles

We know the creatures are CG because they'd have to be, but Phil Tippet's designs are rendered so meticulously that we can believe, along with the Grace children, that the parallel world chronicled by their weird grandfather Arthur Spiderwick actually exists. It seems that films aimed at children rarely capture the imagination and appreciation of the branch's executive committee, but this one could break through.



Studio: Paramount

VFX: Industrial Light & Magic, Tippet Studio ■

Barbara Robertson is an award-winning journalist who specializes in CG animation and visual effects.

We'll handicap the tricky animated shorts category of the Oscar race in the next issue.



Adding New Wrinkles to the Game

How Digital Domain created computerized versions of human behavior for David Fincher's acclaimed feature, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

by Ron Magid

Digital actors come that much closer to reality in director David Fincher's daring production, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, whose central conceit is that the titular character ages backwards, beginning the film in extreme old age and ending as a baby. Thus, when Button (portrayed by Brad Pitt) looks his oldest, he acts youngest, ultimately regressing into a very wise infant.

Fincher (*Fight Club*, *Zodiac*) returned to Digital Domain (they have been working together for 15 years) to determine how they could transform actor Brad Pitt into the peculiar Mr. Button. Although DD was the first vfx house to digitally marry human performance to traditional makeup effects in *Interview with the Vampire*, *Button*'s demands were infinitely more complex.

"First off, we knew there couldn't be any photography of Brad in the performance, except as reference," says character supervisor Steve Preeg, who worked on *Button* for two years, initially building the rigs that would enable DD to channel Pitt's acting into the digital Benjamin Button. "We didn't want to project video of Brad onto digital geometry or composite him in wearing old-age makeup—in order to work, Button had to be

completely digital. Essentially the goal was: It's not any kind of trick, it's completely CG for 325 shots—including up-close dialogue and moments of quiet contemplation. It's not a performance we could hide between motion blur or rain or nighttime, it's Fincher with his 250-frame shots, so it was a scary thing to step into."

Believably replicating natural human behavior is the holy grail of computer animation. But thus far, with the exceptions of Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and moments in *Beowulf*, creating a believable digital human remains elusive. Performance is something mysterious that happens inside the actor—to impart that to a digital character means to project that performance through skin and eyes that aren't his.

Fortunately, Preeg had been on the bleeding edge in digital character creation, working as a

rigger on Gollum and contributing to *King Kong* for Peter Jackson's Weta, which provided templates for the multidisciplinary approach needed to funnel Pitt's performance into Button. First, Digital Domain asked Rick Baker's Cinovation Studios to create three fully painted and haired silicone heads of Pitt from old- through middle-age, based on Greg Cannom's makeup design, which became the models for Button's digital persona.

"They felt with our experience and knowledge of sculpture, we could create real world heads that would resemble an old Brad Pitt better than if they were done entirely in the computer," says the multi-Oscar'd Baker, who was excited by the possibilities inherent in the digital realm. "Since makeup is an additive process, we would have had to build up Brad's cheekbones to make his face look sunken, but since this character would ultimately be digital, we could actually carve into these heads rather than build up areas. The results were very impressive," he adds. "It's amazing what can be created when we all work together."

Cinovation's sculptures were then scanned into the computer and later married to actor Brad Pitt's real-world performance driving the now-digital models—after much blood, sweat and tears from DD's artists.

Fincher edited the film using footage of costumed body doubles as Button, whose size changes as he ages backwards. The doubles wore Button's costumes, their heads covered by blue hoods with tracking markers, where DD would later graft Pitt's digital performance. For video reference and image analysis, Pitt performed to playback of Button's body double and his co-actors using a third-party system which created digital performance data by analyzing the video footage of Pitt's facial features rather



Epic Visions: David Fincher's painterly visuals are seamlessly aided by the subtle effects created by Digital Domain, Asylum VFX, Lola VFX, Matte World Digital, Gentle Giant, Hydraulx, Cinovation and Drac Studios' make-up work.



than tracking dots on his face.

"We didn't want Brad watching a monitor—we wanted his eye lines and his reactions," Preeg explains. "Brad hopped off his motorcycle, put his cap on backwards and just sat or stood, watching a 40-shot sequence on the monitor twice. We'd turn the monitor off, he'd listen to playback in his ear bud and perform that entire sequence by reacting to audio cues. In six days time he did the performance for what amounted to about an hour of screen time. And they weren't long days, even factoring in the number of takes David did."

Preeg says he prayed that Pitt would perform perfectly in sync with each cut of his performance—like lip-synching to playback in a musical—but Fincher's was a more organic process. "I thought Brad would perform shot by shot, almost like an ADR session over the body double," Preeg admits. "Instead, he wasn't trying to match the double's timing, words or emotion for that matter. I think Brad felt free to improvise when we were capturing him, which was very scary. I was like, 'Oh God, what are they doing?' I was hoping that he was going to sync it up perfectly, but that wasn't going to happen. Also, he wasn't just responding to dialogue. It's a very subdued movie, in 40 shots the only audio cues might be footsteps or a creaky door, but somehow Brad recorded the timing of the whole sequence in his head."

On the plus side, Preeg felt Button's "character came through much better" because of those long improvisatory takes. "I think it made the performance better, but it was definitely harder on us." After image analysis, the real fun began. "Whatever capture process you use, the computer then puts out something—let's call it a 'sterile' for lack of a better word," Preeg says. "It's putting in emotion based on its best guess at what Brad's face was doing, but the face is very

complicated and not easily read by the computer—it's best figured out by other humans. You can look at a picture of a person in a magazine without much context and know that person's sad, but a computer will never figure that out."

Digital Domain dubbed this entire process of capturing performance and expressions and bringing it to the character "emotion capture."

After wrestling with imparting Pitt's performance into their 3-D animation, compositing Button's head onto various body doubles was night-

acter? "I'm not sure that's quantifiable," Preeg says. "Eyes are hugely critical; their direction, where the lids sit, just how much water and how much depth they have. We spent a lot of time just looking at these eyes and how we could render them. That was the only part of the rig we changed. We were part way through and the eyes weren't quite reading, so we added some extra rigging and extra geometry to get layers of color and water to keep the audiences' eyes on his eyes. If the audience loses that connection to



"Essentially the goal was: It's not any kind of trick, it's completely CG for 325 shots, including up-close dialogue and moments of quiet contemplation. It's not a performance we could hide between motion blur or rain or nighttime, it's [David] Fincher with his 250-frame shots, so it was a scary thing to step into."

—Digital character supervisor Steve Preeg

marish: "There were times when the dialogue was totally different than what was in the take, or other cases where the shadow of the double's chin falling on the body was out of sync with Brad talking. And getting those tight live-action collars and necks to meet up was a pretty huge task for our paint, roto and comp teams."

And now the million-dollar question: How did DD's artists transform that CG object into a char-

acter? "There were times when the dialogue was totally different than what was in the take, or other cases where the shadow of the double's chin falling on the body was out of sync with Brad talking. And getting those tight live-action collars and necks to meet up was a pretty huge task for our paint, roto and comp teams."

Paramount's *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* is now playing in theaters nationwide.

Top 10 Animation/ VFX Tools of the Year

We left it up to our readers to pick their favorite animation and vfx tools/software packages of the year. Here are the terrific 10 items that earned the most votes, in alphabetical order:

3ds Max (3D Studio Max)

'09. Employed in many of the top Hollywood film productions, videogames and TV commercials, but also priced for the home studio, this full-featured 3D modeling, animation, rendering and effects solution has everything you need to create high-quality content. The latest version, 3ds Max 9, offers new



rendering capabilities, improved interoperability with industry-standard products including Revit software, lighting simulation and analysis technology and additional time-saving animation and mapping workflow

tools. The software now comes in two distinct flavors to better meet the specific needs of entertainment and visualization customers. In addition, greater OBJ translation fidelity and more import/export options allow for more accurate data transfers between 3ds Max and digital modeling packages, including the new Autodesk Mudbox software. Suggested retail price is \$3,495, with upgrades from 3ds Max 2008 going for approximately \$895.

Adobe Creative Suite 4 Master Collection.

Adobe has crammed a bunch of its popular software applications into this little box. This comprehensive, cross-media creative environment offers users a wide variety of options for designing print, inter-



Adobe
CS4

active, web, film, video and mobile content. Integrating new versions of widely used Adobe software, the suite allows artists to design freely with images, vectors, video and sound, moving easily from page to screen. The Master Collection combines Adobe InDesign CS4, Photoshop CS4 Extended, Illustrator CS4, Acrobat 9 Pro, Flash CS4 Professional, Dreamweaver CS4, Fireworks CS4, Contribute CS4, After Effects CS4, Premiere Pro CS4, Soundbooth CS4, OnLocation CS4 and Encore CS4 with additional tools and services. You get all that for \$2,499, or upgrade for \$899.

Blender. Developed as an in-house application by Dutch animation studio NeoGeo and Not a Number Technologies (NaN), Blender is a free, open-source 3D content creation suite avail-



able for all major operating systems under the GNU General Public License. It may not have all the same bells and whistles of leading packages such as Max and Maya, but this software is a great value considering what it costs—nothing. Students, independents, hobbyists and even professionals can take advantage of Blender's tools for modeling, rigging, animation, rendering, UV unwrapping, shading, physics and particles, imaging and compositing and realtime 3D/game creation. Blender

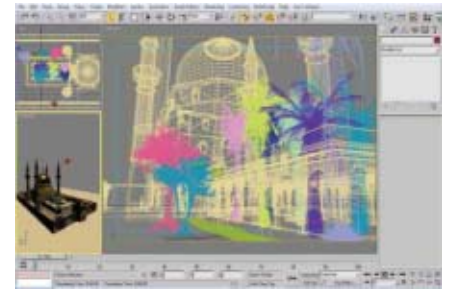
can be downloaded from www.blender.org, where visitors will find educational materials and support, as well as an online community of users.

DigiCel FlipBook. Many of our readers wrote in to tell us how easy it is to create 2D animation and line tests with this classic number. FlipBook allows animators to draw right on the com-



puter using their mouse or tablets, or draw on paper, then shoot the rough sketches under a camera for speed, then scan the cleaned up drawings for quality. You can also paint the drawings quickly and add pans and zooms and then export the movies to the web. You can download the entry-level program for \$79, the midrange version for \$299 and the high-end professional program (1,500 frames and 99 foreground layers) for \$699. As one of the software's fans noted, "What I like about FlipBook is that you feel like it was made with the animator in mind!"

e-on's Vue 7 xStream. This product from e-on Software offers professional CG artists a complete toolset for creating rich and realistic natural environments and integrating them into any professional production pipe-



line, including 3ds Max, Maya, LightWave, CINEMA 4D and XSI. Possible applications for the 3D scenery program range from architectural visual-

ization to broadcast and film. Vue offers full interaction with native elements, including two-way mutual shadow casting, reflection, refraction and lighting. The latest release is based on a totally redesigned integration approach. Among the new features is EcoSystem Generation III, featuring new Dynamic Population Technology for creating dense ecosystems that extend beyond the horizon without concern over the number of instances. There's also a new way of viewing scenes from a graph-based point of view, MetaNodes for grouping several nodes or links into a single node and full compatibility with mental ray technologies such as Sun & Sky, Photometric Lights and Distributed Bucket Rendering. Special offer pricing through www.e-onsoftware.com is currently \$1,235.

Luxology's modo 302. It's hard to believe that the first version of modo was introduced at the SIGGRAPH con-fab more than four years ago. Since



then, the advanced polygon, subdivision surface, modeling, sculpting, 3D painting, animation and rendering package has made believers out of many in the community. This brilliant tool helps artists create realistic objects quickly, while incorporating advanced features such as n-gons, 3D painting and edge weighting. The current version offers tool updates, more rendering and animation features, and a physical sky and sun model. Oh, and don't forget that some of the artists working on this little indie movie called *WALL•E* used modo to deliver the goods this past summer!

Maya '09. Once the crown jewel in Alias|Wavefront's arsenal of digital creation tools, Maya is now a sibling of

Autodesk's 3ds Max. Maya '09 launched just in time to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the popular 3D modeling, animation, rendering and effects solution. Highlights of the latest release include a new Maya Assets toolset and other new tools for managing the complexity and size of scenes, a new Render Proxy feature in mental ray, additional multi-threading work and algorithmic speedups, accelerated modeling workflow and collaborative, iterative projects and pipelines. The software has a new animation layering paradigm that provides animators with increased non-destructive flexibility, as well as an updated Render Pass toolset that offers precise control over render output and optimizes integration with Autodesk Toxik procedural compositing software. The suggested retail price is \$1,995 for Maya Complete 2009 (standalone) and \$4,995 for Maya Unlimited 2009 (standalone). The upgrade price from Maya Complete 2008 is \$899, and the upgrade from Maya Unlimited 2008 is \$1,249.

Pixologic's ZBrush 3.1. It's not surprising that many of today's 3D artists, game developers and CG model supervisors have embraced this leading software application. The 3.1 version offers a new Brush Palette and features such as color mask and back-



Image by Fred Bastide

face masking, as well as poseable symmetry, user-assigned hotkeys, support of square alphas, refined user interface and higher subdivision levels. This slickly integrated modeling, texturing and illustration environment also offers instant feedback and real-time re-



sponse—kind of like a friendly teacher (priced at \$599) you can count on when you need to deliver a challenging digital sculpting assignment!

Toon Boom Software. Our readers had a hard time picking among the Montreal-based company's family of various products, but one thing they all agreed on was that the Emmy-winning solutions have made 2D animation much easier and more user-friendly. Whether they're aimed at home users (Toon Boom Studio), boutique shops, freelancers and educators (Toon Boom Animate or Toon Boom Digital Pro) or traditional film/TV industry studios (Toon Boom Opus and Harmony), they've been hugely influential in the creation of modern animation projects in the past two decades. They even have a great model for beginners—Flip Boom, which is ideal for learning the basics. Keep in mind that some of the notable 2D animated features of recent years (*The Triplets of Belleville*, *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie* and *Curious George*) used Toon Boom software in their pipelines!

Wacom Cintiq 12WX. Aaaah, Wacom tablet, how do we love thee. It's easy to admire the beautiful design, the 12.1" TFT display and the way the 4.4 pound gizmo offers the advantages of a wide-format LCD monitor with Wacom's pro pen technology. We could mention the point accuracy, the fast cursor control and the 1,000-plus levels of pressure-sensitivity on the pen tip and eraser, but once you take a look at the 12WX, the heart takes over the mind. Most importantly, you can take this small wonder home for only a grand. ■



Feline Frenzy

How a simple Flash exercise launched an animated cat trilogy that became a YouTube sensation.

by Charles Solomon

Any cat owner would recognize the scene immediately: In a toy-littered bedroom, a man tries to sleep while his cat tries to wake him up. The cat stretches, purrs, meows, walks on the man and pats his face. When these tactics fail, the cat picks up a baseball bat and takes matters into his own paws. But he's not acting out of malice—he just wants his breakfast.



Cat Man Do and two other short Simon's Cat films were created by British commercial animator-director Simon Tofield and have become a huge hit on YouTube. Totalling only six minutes, *Cat Man Do* (2007), *Let Me In* (2008) and *TV Dinner* (2008) have gotten more than 16.5 million hits; that many admissions would make an animated feature a blockbuster.

Tofield had no plans to release *Cat Man Do* when he made the film: It began as a simple exercise to learn the Flash animation program. "I sat down one morning to work my way through the mechanics of it," Tofield recalls in a telephone interview from London. "As I was making up a project to help me learn, a kitten I'd just gotten—named Hugh—was jumping on my head and batting at my nose, and I thought, 'I'll just animate that. I'll base it on cat movements and mannerisms with a gag at the end.' I didn't think anything of it; it was just a little exercise to learn the program."

While he was in school, Tofield largely taught himself how to animate by drawing flip books. He uses Flash in a similar way to create films that have

the feel of traditionally drawn animation.

"I draw straight onto the Wacom tablet with a digital pen," Tofield explains. "I don't use keys, I just do one drawing after another. I don't scan stuff in, I draw straight ahead into the screen; that way, I can get the looseness of the line. It's just a style I made up that's a bit like the flip books. I don't really know anything about Flash, only my way of doing things."

Tofield has spent the last 10 years working with Tandem Films founder Daniel Greaves (the creator of the Oscar-winning short *Manipulation*) as an animator and a director. His commercial work in the U.K. spans a wide range of styles. An environmental public service spot and an ad for the Singapore Zoo capture the look of children's crayon drawings. A beer commercial features a calligraphic dodo. But the Simon's Cat mini-films eclipse his commercial work in popularity. In conjunction with a recent commercial Tofield directed, Tandem printed 500 t-shirts with a drawing of the Cat (who remains unnamed) to benefit the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. They sold out almost instantly.

Cat Man Do, which won Best Comedy in the British Animation Awards in 2008, came to the public's attention when a client asked to use it on their website to test their Internet service in America. They were stunned when they got 60,000 hits over two nights, a level of traffic that almost shut down their server. More than 50 visitors put the film on YouTube under various titles, none of them credited to Tofield.

The artist seems a bit puzzled by the success of the films that began as a technical exercise. He attributes a lot of the popularity to the believable personality of his feline character. "He's a quintessential cat: He's cute, but he's

also maniacal and devious. He gets what he wants, but still shows his cute little face," Tofield says. "I think that's what people liked about the first film; he was so cute to start with—



Simon Tofield

the pawing on the bed, the big eyes. Then he got the bat out and cracked me over the head—that showed his true side. People say, 'Ah, that's my cat, that is,' which I think is part of the appeal."

Tofield continues to observe his three cats—the Cat in the films is "an amalgamation of all of them—and having three means there's endless material." He takes the train into London every morning, and spends his commute



time doodling further adventures for Simon's Cat in his sketch book. But in some ways, Tofield is a victim of his own success.

"The more people that see cat films, the more work I get, and the more work I get, the less time I have to do another cat film," he concluded. "I have a nice idea for another one that I've had to put on the back burner. It's similar to the first one, where I don't do a lot and the cat does all the acting. I'd love to do that one, but I don't know when I'll get the time. Every other comment on the website is someone asking for another film. I feel kind of guilty for not bashing them out." ■

To view Tofield's feline shorts, visit www.simonscat.co.uk, or YouTube.

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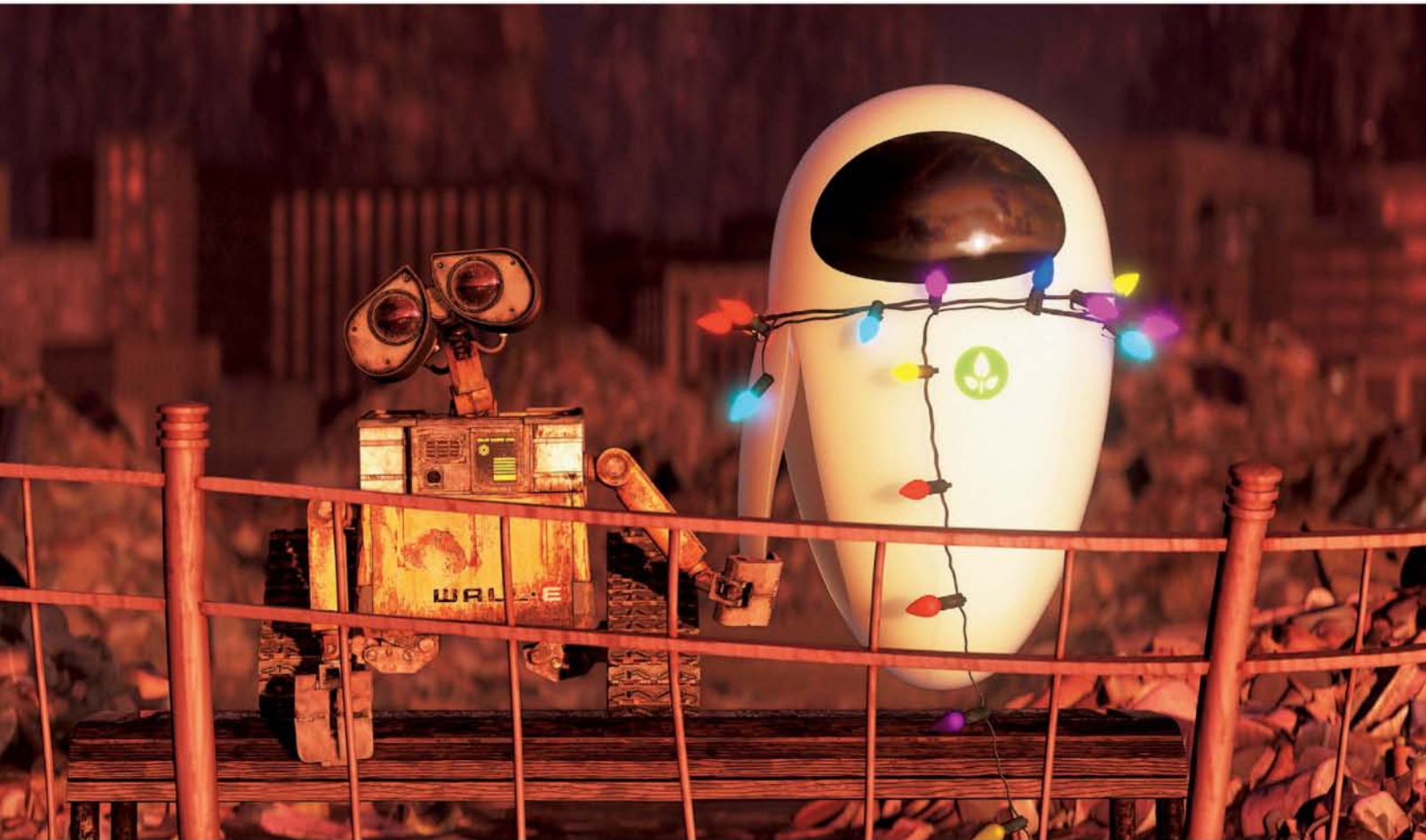
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Phoenix Film Critics Society • San Diego Film Critics Society • Southeastern Film Critics Assn.
St. Louis Film Critics • Toronto Film Critics Assn. • Washington, DC Area Film Critics Assn.

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE TOP TEN



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